

ONE SHILLING

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BY FIVE MEN & A WOMAN

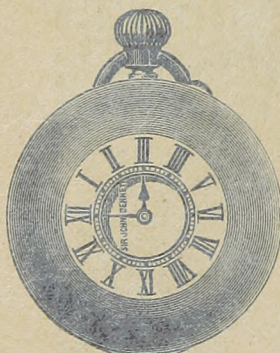


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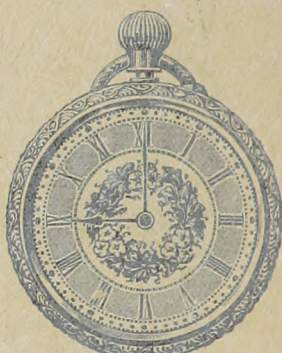
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OF
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A SHOCKER IN SIX SHOCKS.

BY
FIVE MEN AND A WOMAN.

"On horror's head horrors accumulate."—*Othello*.

WITH ORIGINAL DRAWING BY G. A. STOREY, A.R.A.

GARDNER AND CO.,
26, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1890.

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THE ADVENTURERS' CLUB:

WHAT IT IS.

WE are always hearing of the oddities and peculiarities of London clubs, but perhaps the strangest of them all has been passed by completely unnoticed. The club in question is the Adventurers' Club, which meets in two moderate-sized rooms over a shop in Regent Street. Its nature is perhaps best understood from the motto which it bears, taken from the well-known saying of Lord Beaconsfield, "Adventures are to the adventurous." Certainly the records of the club are able to show that its members have not been without their fair share of such doings. The club at present consists of five members, and the rules are short and simple.

The members meet on one night in every month and dine together. At ten o'clock their meeting breaks up, and each proceeds

to wander till the dawn through London in search of adventures. Next morning they re-assemble at eleven o'clock, and relate what has befallen them in the course of the night.

It must not be thought that the members in the curious missions they undertake are actuated by nothing but the love of novelty and excitement. Though such considerations no doubt attract them to a certain extent, they are influenced still more by the sentiment which belonged to the knight-errants of old. In truth, they are men in whom that spirit of knight-errantry, which came partly from the love of redressing wrong, and of doing good, partly from the desire to see men and things, is still alive. Indeed, they are under the most solemn oath to leave no wrong they find being done in the course of their wanderings unredressed, be the danger never so great and the toil never so arduous. Justly, therefore, they may claim to rank with Sir Galahad and his peers.

JULIAN STRACHAN'S STORY.

ON an evening in the month of August last, the club met at its usual monthly dinner, and the members having dined, dispersed over London on their night's work. Julian Strachan, the youngest member—the first man, by the way, who ever climbed Monte Rosa by the rocks in the winter—after lots had been drawn in the usual way, that is, by each member placing his finger at random on the map of London, found that his destined field of operations was in a north-easterly direction. Accordingly, he hailed a cab at Piccadilly Circus, and directed the man to Eleanor Road, London Fields, the street on which he had struck his finger.

Next morning, when the party assembled at the club, all were there except Julian Strachan. For an hour his companions waited, wondering what had become of him. At last,

the club commissioner announced, with the perfect imperturbability only acquired by long service in such an institution, that Mr. Strachan was below insensible in a hansom. The cabman, it appeared, had found him, in the early morning, on Clapham Common, lying just as he lay now, perfectly rigid and insensible, with his coat open and the badge which the members of the club always wore when on these expeditions fully displaying the following directions—"Please convey me to No. —, Regent Street, W., where you will be handsomely rewarded."

When Julian Strachan's body was placed on the club sofa, and the members were able to examine his condition, a very strange circumstance was at once noticed. In the first place, he was obviously alive, for he was warm; but, at the same time, neither did his heart beat nor was there any sign of breathing in the lungs. He appeared, indeed, in some curious state of suspended animation. Another noticeable fact was that an odd faint smell, somewhat aromatic, and not unpleasant, was distinctly perceptible to any one bending over him.

"What on earth can have happened to him?" said Richard Ullathorne, the president of the club, who had been a doctor and had

kept up his medical knowledge. "There is no sign of a concussion on any part of his body, nor is he in a fit. At the same time, conditions such as we see here could not possibly have been produced by any drug that I ever heard of." Then, with a sudden cry, bending over the body, "By Jove! I believe it's Sululah. I can't mistake that extraordinary smell. I'm sure it's that very same smell. But where on earth could he have picked up Sululah in London?"

To the eager inquiries of his friends, Ullathorne soon explained that Sululah was the mysterious drug distilled by the Haytian sorcerers from herbs unknown to modern science, the secret of which they steadily refuse to tell. The effect of the drug, however, is well known by report. It has the power of simulating death in the human frame, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, of killing life and yet preserving the body in such a condition that it can be re-animated. Travellers relate how in Hayti the medicine-men have buried in the ground and kept there for years persons treated with the drug, which is, in fact, an African realization of the potion given to Juliet by Friar Lawrence.

"There can be no doubt," Ullathorne went

on, "that this is Sululah ; though I am, perhaps, the only man in London who could have discovered it. The fact is, once when in the West Indies I saved the life of an old Haytian witch, and in gratitude she gave me a small phial of the stuff. I was eager to try experiments with it. I never managed to do so, however, for the phial broke in my portmanteau. I well remember though the smell, so strange and pungent, which clung to my clothes for months, and which I thought I should never be rid of."

"But how are we to restore him ? that's the question," exclaimed several members at once. At the same moment, however, Ullathorne uttered a cry of astonishment.

"What is this stuck in his nose ?"

In an instant he had seized and drawn down from the nostrils of the rigid Strachan two large pieces of cotton-wool, saturated with some red-coloured liquid.

The cotton-wool withdrawn, strong salts applied to Strachan's nose soon produced a fit of sneezing, which was gradually followed by other signs of reawakening, till at last, after the most approved means of restoring animation had been tried under Ullathorne's directions, Strachan began once more to breathe and his blood to circulate. In about four hours he was

quite himself again, and feeling very little the worse for his strange experience. It was proposed at first that the hearing of his adventures should be postponed to another meeting. To this, however, Strachan emphatically objected.

"No, no. For heaven's sake let me tell you now. The thing has been too horrible! If I don't speak of it now, I never shall."

As the most complete confession of the whole night's adventures is a rule which no member of the club, under pain of expulsion, is allowed to break, this announcement made it absolutely necessary to tell the story at once, and the members took their usual seats to hear the first of the night's adventures. They could not, however, help feeling that something more than ordinarily curious had happened. They had heard in that room plenty of strange and terrible things related by men who remained completely unmoved, though what they had to tell might have well secured a certain exhibition of feeling. This time, however, it was evident that perhaps the most intrepid member of the club had something on his mind which filled him with a horror he ill knew how to control.

As he began his story, he leaned forward against the table at which they were sitting,

and his eyes were fixed with a look of fear and dismay such as Julian Strachan's eyes had never worn before. Still he contrived to keep his narrative to a bare and simple recital of the facts, such as is strictly enjoined by the club rules, for nothing in its nature sensational or exaggerated is allowed in the official narration of a night's adventure.

"My driver started rightly enough in the direction I had told him. When, however, he should have turned out of the Hackney Road up Great Cambridge Street, he, by mistake, took a wrong turning, tried to correct himself, failed, and then drove on with that reckless regard of time and space which a cabman always shows when he has lost his way. At last it became evident to both of us that we had got wrong somehow. We were in the midst of a quarter of small second-rate detached villas, mixed up with ordinary street houses. While my cabman was still going at full speed, apparently with the notion that he would come out on some locality he knew if he only drove on long enough and hard enough, our progress was suddenly arrested in coming round a corner by a violent collision with another cab. Instinctively I held on to the sides and kept my place. I saw, however, that the occupant of the cab which we had charged had been less

fortunate, and had fallen heavily on the ground. As soon as I could, I and the two drivers went to his assistance, for the man himself never even stirred. It did not take us long to see that he had broken his neck, and had been killed on the spot. Naturally, my first thought was to find out where he lived. Accordingly, I placed my hand in his pocket, but could find nothing except a card and a purse. In the purse were five pounds in gold. The card had no name on it, indeed nothing but the words, 'Caliban Club. Admit one.' There was evidently then nothing to do but to take the dead man to the nearest police-station. Accordingly, we lifted him into his cab, and I told the driver to go on, and that I would follow him.

"I then proceeded to get into my own vehicle, in order to give the necessary explanations to the police in person. What was my disgust to discover that my cab had been badly injured in the collision, and that it could not go! One of the wheels had been so damaged that the first attempt to move it brought the body of the cab crash down on the ground. Before, however, we made this discovery, the other cab was out of sight. There was nothing then left for me to do but to pay my driver, which I did, and to take to my feet,

leaving my chance of adventures to the locality in which I found myself.

“Walking in the direction which my pocket-compass told me was north-east, I had not gone more than a hundred yards before I saw a house standing back in a little garden, with a bright electric light burning in a lamp over the door. This door stood open, and just as I came up a man in a thick overcoat was walking in. The place did not look like a private house, but like some institution, and I thought it would perhaps be worth while to see what it really was under the excuse of asking my way. Accordingly I walked boldly up the path and in at the door. Just inside stood a little wizened man with bright eyes. As I passed him he looked up, stared very hard, and then muttered the words, ‘The new member. All right, sir. Ticket quite correct, sir;’ and I found myself walking quietly up a well-carpeted staircase. His remark about the ‘ticket’ drew my attention to the fact that the card marked ‘Caliban Club,’ which I had taken from the pocket of the dead man, was still in my hand. It was obvious, I thought, that I was coming to something interesting here, and I accordingly resolved to take the full advantage secured to me by the ticket into the possession of which I had come so

strangely. At the head of the stairs I found myself in a room heavily and luxuriously furnished. Plush curtains of red hung on the doors, and a red-shaded lamp was on a central table in the room. Here, too, were a number of coats, hats, sticks and umbrellas. So as not to appear ignorant of the ways of the place, I divested myself of hat and overcoat, and was about to look round me again, when I heard the voice of the little man below calling to me—‘You had better go into the dining-room, sir. They are just going to begin supper.’

“I took the hint, pushed aside one of the red plush curtains at hazard, and found myself in a long room furnished in a style of barbaric magnificence—such as the French aptly term *un luxe violent*—but utterly devoid of taste or beauty, in which was spread a long supper-table, laid for twenty people, and profusely decorated with flowers and silver plate. Round the table were seated a considerable number of men and one woman. There was one vacant chair close at hand as I entered the room. Naturally enough, as I did not want to look ill at ease, I took the chair and unfolded the napkin in my plate. Several of the people seated at the table glanced with a half-surprised look at me, muttered something about the ‘new member,’ and then went on eating a

soup of some sort which was just being served. Till it came to my turn to be helped, I thought I would look round and observe the room and the company. The first thing that struck me was a curious sickly odour which pervaded the whole room, and seemed to cling to the heavy red plush curtains and to the green silk hangings of the walls—red, green, and gold were the colours of decoration. So intolerable, indeed, for some reason, which I could not then explain, was this smell, that at first I thought I could not possibly endure to remain in the room. A strong effort of will, however, soon conquered my repugnance, and I next tried to make out something of the strange company in which I found myself. Next to me was seated perhaps the most revolting specimen of the human race that I ever set eyes upon. He was a pure-bred negro, with a figure almost square, so short was his stature, and so enormously disproportioned was his breadth of shoulder and girth of waist to his length of figure. Though the creature was hardly more than five feet high, he must have weighed at least fifteen stones. His face was not very black, but rather ashy green or gray in colour, while his huge, bloated, purple lips protruded hideously. His cheeks were swollen, and his woolly head, sunk well

down between his shoulders, bobbed up and down as he eat like a cork in the water. I heard a word or two of his conversation—enough to enable me to realize for the first time that the *timbre* of a human voice might in itself, and alone, be sufficient ground for shooting a man dead at sight. In half negro, half French-English, he exclaimed—

“‘Dat is all a lie! Why cannot he get it more than once a month? At Port-au-Prince, in my house, I had it every day. Ah! dat is good living there,’—and as he spoke he rubbed his hideous, short-fingered hands with glee.

“Opposite the negro was a specimen of human nature almost as disgusting to look upon, though from a different reason. One displayed the beastiality of the savage, the other that of the civilized man depraved. Evidently a gentleman, and elaborately dressed, his face yet bore on it a look of wolfish longing which was horrible to see. The man seemed eaten up by some desire of the impossible, which had half maddened him. The tale of his life, indeed, was plainly written on his face. The mad pursuit of pleasure in a mind constitutionally tinged with insanity had bred in him that terrible *amour de l'impossible* which, like a will o' the wisp, leads men through endless, hopeless mazes of wickedness, always promising that this

last new expedient for getting pleasure shall really be successful, and always deceiving them. It was strange to mark how differently the two men ate. The flabby-fleshed negro, with the bloated lips, choked and spluttered over his food and devoured what was before him as if doubting whether he would ever get enough in quantity to appease his appetite. The wolfish man seemed to reverse matters. Before his food came to him, he showed a restless longing, an eager expectation. Evidently he believed that now at last he was going to enjoy himself, and that pleasure this time was really coming his way. As he watched his turn, a pallid flame of happiness lit up his drawn and hollow cheeks. The actual food, however, brought to him no more satisfaction than to Tantalus. No sooner had he tasted, than disgust and satiety were upon him, and he pushed the plate from him with a look of intense and most deadly loathing. With each new course, however, his appetite and hope seemed to revive, only to be again disappointed. Next him was a strange contrast—a common-looking seafaring man, who evidently was poorer than most of the party among whom he found himself. His face was the only one in the room which awoke in me any feeling but that of disgust. He seemed as if

under the lash of some demon whom he dreaded and hated, but could not control. He remained absolutely silent, and with his eyes fixed in a stony stare. There was no mistaking the eyes, they were those of a madman. As he ate he every now and then raised them from his plate, without, however, raising his head, and looking round half savagely, half as if frightened, as will a wild and starved dog or cat if you place food before it. While it eats, its eyes are perpetually on the watch against a surprise. The man before me evidently ate in fear and trembling that the food would somehow be wrested from him. At the head of the table was the only woman present. In her person and her face she showed the wreck of a marvellous beauty, though of a beauty ruined and degraded by the indulgence of evil passions. Only once have I seen an expression quite like hers, in which an intense sense of misery and shame seemed searching for some relief that never came. The face was that of an opium-eater ready for another dose of the drug she counted upon to lift her from hell to heaven.

“Just as I finished my survey of the table, the soup was placed before me. The odour, however, that I had noticed before rose so

strongly from it that I put it away untasted. I did the same with two or three made dishes of the *entrée* kind which followed. Somehow or other, as I sat there a sense of horror came over me which I could not resist, but which I felt I had no right to feel; for after all, what had happened, except that I had come upon a supper-party in a very hideously-decorated room, where the company was rather silent and ill-looking? But somehow, with or without cause, I was filled with a sense of horror such as a man only feels who has fallen into a deep crevasse when he believes himself to be the only man on the glacier that day.

“I declare I would have given anything to have risen from my chair, fled down the stairs, and left the house. My obligation to the club, however, to see such an adventure through controlled me, and, though the sweat broke out upon my brow in my agony, I forced myself to remain. It was not long before my sense of horror was amply justified.

“As I was gazing half fascinated by the face of the wolfish man in front of me, I felt a tremor of excitement run round the table, and heard voices murmuring, ‘Good! ah, good!’ I looked up and saw that the porter, who did the waiting, was bringing a dish into the room.

I realized all then—that I was in a den of cannibals! In a moment, and without forming any fixed resolution, I jumped from my place, ran round the table, threw myself before the man who bore the dish, drew out my revolver, and shouted, ‘I will put a bullet through the first man who attempts to touch what is on that dish.’

“In a moment the whole company at the table had sprung to their feet, and were yelling, screaming, or dancing round me. I seemed in the midst of a band of yelling lunatics. They literally threw themselves upon me, and as I was borne to the ground the revolver dropped from my hand in the struggle. From the time when I found myself on the ground, with the huge negro sitting on my legs, and three or four of the other men holding my arms, I can remember nothing distinctly, except that the negro drew out from his pocket a bottle and some cotton-wool, which he saturated with the contents of the bottle, and which one of the other men thrust up my nose. As I lost consciousness, however, I had a dim notion that some hideous sort of incantation was taking place, and that the negro, who had ceased sitting on me, was singing some weird and piercing melody, in which the word ‘Sululah, Sululah,’ seemed

again and again repeated. Here my adventure ends, for where I have been since, and how I was brought home, I know not."

It did not take long to explain to Strachan that he had not been found in the quarter of London which he indicated, but on the other side of the river. The knowledge which had enabled Ullathorne to discover the nature of the drug also showed pretty clearly that the negro Strachan had described was some Haytian of cannibal proclivities, who, though settled in London, had been unable to forego his hideous taste for human flesh, and who had made use of the strange secret of the drug which suspends animation without destroying life, to get rid of the discoverer of the shameful secrets of the Caliban Club.

When their first horror at the story had passed away, the President shortly addressed the members.

"It is evident," said he, "the matter cannot rest here. We must find out the Caliban Club, and hunt down this nest of infamous wretches. That, however, will be a work of time, and may be undertaken at our leisure. We have, however, one or two good clues, such as Strachan's cabman, and the cabman of the dead man, and so may fairly hope for a successful termination of our search. Surely

those devils must have had a man of cultivation amongst them at some time or other, for it is not every one who knows that Caliban is the anagram of cannibal, as it was spelt in the days of Shakespeare."

IN THE FOREIGN QUARTER.

PAUL WILMOT was a man of studious habits, who took a keen interest in the scientific pursuits and investigations of this highly scientific century, more especially those branches of science which have to do with the development, structure, and function of the organic world, such as biology, physiology, and human and comparative anatomy.

He had spent some years at the Universities of Edinburgh, Paris, and Leipzig, where he had written several minor works on original research in the laboratories, which had been published in the respective *Proceedings*, *Revue*s, and *Blätter* devoted to such things.

He was a small, slenderly-built man of about eight and twenty, with wiry dark hair, which grew rather long, keen brown eyes, and delicate long-fingered hands, that ought to have belonged to a violin-player. He was not a man of surprising muscular strength, but was very active, a skilful swordsman—as several

French and German fellow-students had discovered—and had a strong and subtle sense of humour. He took his share of the pleasures which life offered quite as readily as he pursued the knowledge of its inner workings, and was a great favourite at the Club, although they rather mocked at his capabilities for adventure, and in a kindly way suggested that releasing a mouse from a trap was about the most chivalrous feat he was likely to perform.

When Paul Wilmot had the previous night solemnly laid his hand on the map, and it had been ascertained that the quarter he had pitched upon was Soho, some one had remarked—

“He’ll go to the first smelly little restaurant where German beer is to be had, stay there till they throw him out, and come back to us with some sensational yarns about Nihilists and Communists.”

“Oh, will I?” was the reply. “You wait. My capacity for innocent adventure is as great as any other larger man’s. Mere size is a natural accident, and is nothing to boast of. Good-night, brethren.” And the little man wandered up the street whistling, in a neat black cape and a crush hat a little on one side, and next morning told his story as follows:—

“I did not hurry myself to arrive at the area

in which my quest was to take place, but glanced right and left at the numerous passers-by, and looked in for a few minutes at the Criterion, where I exchanged a few remarks, of a purely scientific character, with the fair operator on the lager-beer engine. Then I walked along Coventry Street, through Leicester Square, and after gazing at the blazing lights of the Alhambra and Empire, turned up Wardour Street, past St. Anne's Church, past Old Compton Street, till I arrived at a restaurant on the right-hand side, with two large globular lamps hanging outside it, over the front window. Between the lamps was the inscription, 'Reinhard Schupp.'

" 'Now,' I thought, 'if I don't draw anything here, I'll go on higher up to Kate O'Connor's, at the Golden Crown, and see what sort of conspirators are there.' I went in, greeted the massive old German landlord—whose predecessors have probably harboured more political exiles than I can count—and ascended a flight of wooden stairs, covered with sawdust, to a large room on the first floor.

"This room was furnished as a humble restaurant, in the German style, with wooden tables, on which were match-boxes, pepper, salt, mustard, and slices of raw turnip. The place was full of customers, smoke, noisy talk,

and the deafening rattle of dominos. Some of those present looked like tradesmen of the neighbourhood—clockmakers' and such like—and some might be political exiles and conspirators, while others might be spies. All were foreigners, mostly German or Austrian, with a sprinkling of Russian and Polish.

“Then I sat down at a table where there were one or two unoccupied chairs, and ordered some beer, lit a cigarette, and looked about me. I knew many of their faces. Blameless addle-heads who thirsted for the blood of kings. One particular individual near me was strange. He looked like a man of education, and wore clean collars and cuffs—rather a fine young fellow.

“I thought I would draw him.

“So, in a more or less practised way of my own, I managed to work into conversation with the stalwart German stranger, and we soon succeeded in conveying to each other, by a freemasonry well known to the initiated, that both had been students in Germany, and had belonged to *Verbindungs*. The first and obvious result of this was beer, followed by mutual introduction. The conversation was in German, but as this is an English account of the proceedings, I will translate.

“‘My name is Wilmot.’

“‘Thank you, very much. My name is Krüger.’ Bows. Beer.

“With the usual outspoken curiosity of a young German, Krüger asked me what I had studied while in Leipzig. I told him that while not engaged in listening to bands at the Garten Hennersdorf in Gohlis, or dancing at the Schillerschlösschen, or drinking at some *Keller* or other, I investigated the problem of nerve-terminations in the cells of the alveoli of the lungs in the common Triton and the renal portal system of the frog. He seemed to awaken at this, and it appeared that he also was an enthusiastic physiologist, who had written his inaugural dissertation on the localization of function in the brain—which, I may remark, for you chaps who are in outer darkness as regards physiology, means the connection of parts of the brain with parts of the body, in the sense of originating or controlling the movements or other functions of such parts. For instance, to use a merely medical or utilitarian example, suppose a subject to be paralyzed in or unable to control, say his left leg. With the knowledge you already possess, you deduce that there is something wrong with a certain convolution, somewhere near the Fissure of Sylvius. You look and see, and you find a tumour or something there.

You take it away. The left leg recovers its normal aptitudes—unless, with the rest of him, it is carted off to Kensal Green. So that is obviously a very entertaining branch of physiology, to say nothing of its practical utility.

“Well, this Krüger said he had been an assistant in the Laboratory at Breslau, but that having succeeded to a small but sufficient competence, he had given up that, and come to England to visit the Laboratories at London, Cambridge, Manchester, and Edinburgh; and had finally joined with an Englishman, who had a private laboratory in his house, where they could carry on experiments unfettered by the idiotic laws which hamper the public laboratories and schools, passed out of subservience to ignorant sentimentalists.

“After we had chatted some time upon scientific matters, and the humours and peculiarities of student-days, Krüger suggested that we should go out for a stroll in the open air, as pleasanter than this noisy, smelly little *gargotte*, ending in a visit to the house where he lived, where, he said, I was welcome to examine the laboratory. I said that I would be delighted, and so we left Schupp’s.

“The dark, faded grandeur and undignified antiquity of those tall Soho houses—those streets which saw the Stuarts in all the riotous

glory of the Restoration, and now serve as lurking places for second-hand dealers, fiddle-makers, who all have the secret of Stradivarius and his varnish, alien exiles of both sexes, and other mysterious and evil things such as no quarter of London but the Soho can contain—made an extraordinary impression on me, as they always do. There is something about poor old Soho which suggests to me an old, old woman who wears the frayed finery of a by-gone age, the mockery of artificial youth.

“I thought for a moment that my companion might be the mere decoy of a gambling-den, but on reflection felt I was wronging him; and when he, quickly divining my suspicion as the light of a street-lamp in Old Compton Street fell on my face, asked if I mistrusted him, for if so, I had better say so, and go away, I repudiated any such notion, and said I would accompany him; and we went by the first turning which led eastwards towards Greek Street. My friend seemed to know his way very well. When in Greek Street he turned under an archway on the east side into a short, narrow, and frouzy street called Rose Street, and opened the front door of one of the many tall dingy houses with a latch-key. In the passage inside the gas was burning low. Krüger turned it up, and revealed, what is often

the case in Soho houses, an interior of decayed grandeur. The walls were dirty, but the shape, solidity, and design of the balustrade of the stairs had an effect of stateliness. Some person of considerable quality or substance had probably lived there when James II. or William III. was king. Krüger lit a candle and led the way up-stairs. I think we went up four stories. Anyhow, when we entered a room it was at the top of the house, for it had a large skylight such as might be over a studio.

“There were two men there, to whom Krüger introduced me, with an explanatory word or two. One, a middle-aged, tall, thin man, with a long beard and spectacles, as Dr. Anderson; the other, a younger man, of large bodily presence, with severely regular features and a shaven face, as Mr. Dyer. They bowed and shook hands with me, and Krüger went to fetch a bottle of wine, apparently from the adjoining room. The two men, Anderson and Dyer, were in what may be called undress. Anderson was in his shirt-sleeves, and Dyer in an old flannel boating-suit. Both smoked well-worn wooden pipes. Before I had looked at the contents of the room, a familiar smell—composed of carbolic acid, thymol, alcohol, and miscellaneous other chemical and biological

appurtenances—told me that I was in a laboratory. A look round settled the matter. There was a dresser or counter, on which were glass funnels with blotting-paper filters dripping into beakers ; metal boxes on stands, from which thermometers protruded ; test-tubes, gas-burners, &c., &c. On the wall hung a pendulum myograph. In a glass cupboard were more delicate apparatus, such as a reflecting galvanometer, a revolving drum, a spectro-scope, and weighing apparatus ; there was also a drying cupboard, and shelves covered with bottles of my old friends, Fehling's fluid, picro-carmin, and so forth. In the middle of the room stood an oblong table covered with zinc.

On the table lay the subject. Dr. Anderson observed—

“ ‘ Ferrier used apes. We are much too humane to practise experiments on the lower animals. That, as you see, is a good specimen of the *Homo lusipicus*. ’

“ ‘ Plenty of them about. Did you get him from the hospital ? ’

“ ‘ From the—— ? Oh, yes. Certainly. George's. ’

“ Here Krüger came in with a long-necked bottle, and proceeded to wash several of the small laboratory beakers at the sink to serve the wine in. We drank to each other, and to

the progress of biological research, and poured great scorn on the oppositions to science on the part of ignorant and obstinate persons. I am afraid I had had just as much stimulant as I could conveniently stand when I left Schupp's, and I half suspect that the good old golden Scharlachberg had been drugged, for it played the mischief with me, and time and space and the bowsprit and the rudder got generally entangled. I have a dim notion that Krüger went for another bottle, of which I may have had my share, and then a blank occurred, probably of some hours' duration. When I awoke I was lying without my coat, waistcoat, or shirt, on the zinc table, in the place of our late friend the subject, who had been bundled under the dresser against the wall. My hands were, I found, secured at the sides of the table; likewise my feet, the legs being extended and separated; and Dr. Anderson and Dyer were standing by me with patient expressions, and their pipes in their mouths.

“ ‘Feel better after your nap, Mr. Wilmot? Have an antacid draught, or some soda?’ said the latter.

“ ‘Don't mind a little of the latter. But I say, what the devil are you up to?’

“To this Anderson calmly replied—

“ ‘ Well, you see, that fellow we had here has exhausted his usefulness. These warm-blooded animals die so quickly. If he had been a tortoise now, or an alligator, he would have lasted ever so long. So as friend Krüger had kindly brought us in another Juggins we thought we had better go on with him, while we were about it. I should think you ought to give some good results. As a physiologist of some distinction, and a contemner of the vulgar sentimentalists and anti-vivisectors, you will no doubt be proud of the opportunity. We propose removing the upper part of the skull with a saw—don’t be afraid I shall tear your *pia mater* unnecessarily or unbecomingly ; I am an old and sure hand. And then we will verify further that big diagram you see on the wall.’

“ There was hanging a paper sheet with a huge outline of the plan and profile of the brain, with the main convolutions, marked all over with circles, and in each circle was a number.

“ ‘ Now, when I put the electrodes on Number 14 in you, I shall be disappointed if you do not flex your right arm, and twitch your right eyelid.’

“ ‘ Look here, is this a joke or is it not ?’ I exclaimed.

“ ‘Does that fellow down there on the floor look as if it had been a joke to him ?’

“ ‘But he is dead.’

“ Oh yes. He is dead—now. That’s why we want you. I hope you won’t wriggle, or make a noise, because it’s vulgar and quite useless. There was a young woman here the night before last, who yelled in a most disagreeable manner until we got the ether-cone on to her, and ether half spoils the whole business.’

“ Here Krüger came in and began washing some bowls, while Dyer got a trephine-saw out of the drawer.

“ At this point, gentlemen, I remembered that heedlessness of danger was one of the cardinal principles of our constitution, and fell into a deadly funk, for whether these fellows were mad or sane, they were quite serious, and evidently were advanced physiologists, whose temperament seemed quite opposed to the idea of a practical joke. Besides, there was the wretched creature I had seen occupying my situation, and a moment’s reflection showed me that a corpse would really have been of no use to Dr. Anderson and his friends in the particular research implied by that ghastly map on the wall. A *living* subject was necessary for that. And I, another *Homo*

lusipicus, or, as Anderson pleasantly put it, 'another Juggins,' was the living subject.

" 'Well,' I inquired somewhat anxiously, 'but how do you dispose of the subjects when they have ceased to—to——'

" 'To respond to stimulus? Well, we use a good deal of them up in the way of bottled preparations.'

" 'Preparations!'

" 'Then what is left, if of no use, we give for food to our little menagerie in the cellar. We are obliged reluctantly to use the lower animals sometimes, though we are much too humane to do so when a fellow-creature will do, or can be had.'

" 'What you don't make preparations of, you feed the dogs and cats and things with? Very jolly. I think it a very happy arrangement.'

" 'You seem to be shivering a good deal. I hope you don't find this room too cold? Dyer, just go and turn the tap on of the gas-stove in the next room, will you? It is a little chilly, these early mornings. I hope you won't think, Mr. Wilmot, that there is any animosity to you personally in this business. It is only that you probably have a good nervous and muscular system; any other healthy person would have done. Is there

any particular part of you you would like to have preserved in spirits, or stained in sections and mounted for the microscope? We have a capital new microtome here, works by a treadle like a sewing-machine. I don't know whether you know them.'

" 'Thanks, awfully. I think I'll leave that to you. But I say, couldn't you postpone matters for a day, and get some other fellow? I am not at all healthy, I assure you, and I have a wretched nervous system.'

" 'Oh, you will undervalue yourself, I am sure. You are talking calmly here, as a brave physiologist and martyr of science should do, where a common man would howl and whine. Don't tell me you haven't got a good nervous system; and as for health, few people could take all the different drinks Krüger says you had and be as well as you are now.'

" Here Dyer came back, saying, 'I can't find any matches.'

" 'Oh, never mind. I'll see to it directly. Here, you work up the induction coil a little way, not too far—a little weaker than the last time, to begin with, and make sure the electrodes are clean. I am sure Mr. Wilmot wouldn't like his *corpora striata* to be touched with dirty electrodes,

“ ‘ I’ll go and see about the gas-stove.’ And he left the room. I heard him strike a wax-match, then there was an awful bang, the windows flew outwards, my table heaved up and bits of the ceiling came down, and something seemed to be on fire. Dyer and Krüger were knocked down, but got up again and bolted like good ’uns down-stairs. The gas-stove had been left turned on by that ass Dyer, and Anderson was reduced to a condition in which he would only be fit to be made preparations of.

“ Soon the public and the police ran in, attracted by the noise and flare, or I might have been roasted. This is all, gentlemen, and now I would like a pint of beer.”

THE PRESIDENT'S STORY.

“Now,” said Richard Ullathorne, the President, “I suppose you want my yarn.

“I must apologize in the first place for not having, as is customary for me to do, arrived first at the club this morning. Had I done so, I could not have related a complete adventure. Now I can tell you all, but before I begin I must remind the members of their word of secrecy—for, by heavens! were it not for my oath to the club, no word of what has passed during the last twelve hours should ever cross my lips.”

“I will answer for the inviolability of your confidence, on my honour, and on that of the other members,” replied the Vice-President.

Ullathorne bowed, and continued—

“The locality which fell to my lot was the district between Hammersmith and Kensington. I told my cabman, after he had passed Olympia, to take a certain turn to the

left. We were presently immersed in a labyrinth of little streets. Whenever the man asked for further directions, I told him to drive straight on and take the second turn to the right. We bowled quickly along for some quarter of an hour, and at last I noticed that the number of hansoms we met or passed was increasing, and also that they were all apparently going to the same destination. I told my driver to follow one of them. We soon became involved in a line of vehicles which one after another were discharging their contents at the door of what looked like a small public building. There were no private carriages in the line, only hansoms and four-wheelers; but the men and women who were getting out of them were all in evening dress. As my cab made its way slowly to the door, I had time to deliberate as to what I should do. I could distinctly hear the sound of dance-music coming from within; this was apparently a public ball of some kind to celebrate the Bank Holiday, and I determined to see what was going on. The problem was how to get in; but remembering our motto, 'Adventures to the adventurous,' I made up my mind to try. There was a four-wheeler just in front of me, and when it stopped at the door a party of five or six at least got

out of it. Could I not slip in with them? I jumped out of my hansom, and to avoid delays flung the man a sovereign. Unfortunately he was honest, and the moment he found out the value of the coin he called out to me to stop. I paid no attention, but he only called the louder; and the linkman, who was swearing at the stoppage of the line, half dragged me back. The quickest thing to do was to shout out, 'It's all right—you've brought me a long way—no mistake.' 'Thank ye, captain,' said the man, touching his hat, 'much obliged, I'm sure.' But the tiresome delay had just lost me my chance, and I was obliged to go in alone. Inside the door was a small stone hall, with a red carpeted staircase leading up from the further end, and at a table sat a man with a heap of invitation cards before him. I pretended not to see him, and walked quickly on; but he soon brought me up short with 'Your ticket, please, sir.' I put my hands into every pocket I possessed, and then said as though astonished, 'Dear me! what a curious thing. I don't seem to have brought it. Can't you let me pass without?' and I tried a golden key—but the man was adamant. 'Very sorry, sir, but my order is strict. This is a private subscription ball, and no one is to be admitted without a card.'

“Just at that moment, as luck would have it, a young man with a large yellow rosette in his button-hole came running down the stairs, and was about to pass into an open door on the left, when hearing the argument between me and the door-keeper, he stopped and asked the man what was the matter. ‘The gentleman’s forgotten his ticket, sir; do you wish me to let him through?’

“‘Yes, of course,’ replied the young man; ‘don’t you know a gentleman when you see one? What does it matter about *his* forgetting *his* card?’

“‘Pardon me,’ I said, ‘I cannot take advantage of your kindness and come in on false pretences. I did not forget my card for the simple——’

“‘Never mind, never mind,’ he interrupted. ‘I am a steward of the ball. I assume all responsibility. Your appearance,’ he continued, laughing, ‘is a sufficient guarantee of your respectability.’

“I drew out my card-case. ‘If you are to assume all responsibility for my good behaviour,’ I said, ‘you ought, at any rate, to know my name.’ He started on reading it. ‘Is it possible,’ he said, ‘that you are the junior partner in Graham, Briddle, and Ullathorne, the great bankers?’ I said I was, and

he continued, 'I am indeed glad that that fool of a fellow did not turn you away. I should never have forgiven him if he had lost you to our ball. We are always glad of a celebrity, and just now that London is ringing with the tremendous *coup* you've made in Tr——' 'Oh, that was only luck,' I interrupted; 'anybody could have done it.' 'I only wish I had,' he replied; 'but come and get off your coat. Dear me! there's no one here to take it for you—let me get you a ticket,' and he presented me with the counterfoil, whilst he pinned one on to my great-coat. 'Number 678,' said I, as I pocketed it, 'that's easy enough to remember.' 'Now let's come upstairs,' said my guide, and we entered the ball-room together. 'Will you,' he continued, 'look round a bit, and if you see any one you'd like to know, come to me. By the way, I haven't told you my name yet—it is Saunders.'

" 'Thanks, very much,' I replied. 'I think I shall apply to you presently; I don't think I see any ladies I know.' But Saunders had already turned away, and I was left to look about me.

"The ball-room was of very moderate size for a public building, and the musicians sat on a raised platform in a window. I saw

a good many men whose faces I knew, but the women were utter strangers—not one of them had I ever set eyes on before. The great thing which struck me about them was that they were all fairly young, all very well dressed, and most of them good-looking. A great many of them, and some of the men too, appeared foreign. Saunders seemed to have disappeared, but at last I saw him talking to a girl who looked singularly different from most of the women in the room. They were mostly handsome after the mode of fashion plates, with trim, tight waists suggestive of Paris dressmakers. She was tall, with the figure of a statue, which was displayed by her loose but clinging robe of some white material, utterly without ornament, except for a frill of soft wide muslin which trimmed the low bodice at the top. They were all elaborately *coiffées*, with their hair turned up like the Eiffel tower on the top of their heads—her sunny brown hair was plainly parted in the middle and fell back in natural waves to a loose knot on the back of her head; but the great difference between her and the others lay in expression—they all looked very gay and lively; not a few indeed, extremely coquettish; while on her beautiful features lay an expression of sadness most pathetic to see. Her eyes I could not

see, for as she passed close by me on Saunders' arm they were cast down.

"Gentlemen," and Ullathorne suddenly turned to the members of the Adventurers' Club, "it is essential for the proper understanding of my adventure that I should tell you every thought and every feeling which crossed my mind last night. I deeply regret this necessity, but it is only by fearlessly fulfilling it that I can keep my oath to the club. To resume my story—

"Just at this moment the musicians struck up another waltz, and Saunders deposited his partner at the other end of the room. I went up to him and asked whether he could introduce me to her. He smiled and said, 'Ah! you've found out already that Miss Harvey is the prettiest woman in the room. Introduce you? No, I'm afraid I can't; she says she is not well, and won't dance. Any one else, my dear sir, and I shall be delighted.'

"'Don't you think you could manage it,' I suggested, 'if you told her I was an utter stranger, and did not know a soul to speak to? she looks kindness itself.'

"'Well,' said Saunders, 'I can but ask her, but don't be disappointed if she says "No."' He went off, and in two or three moments came back and said, 'It's all right, only she says

she is afraid you will be very much bored, for she really does not feel up to dancing.' He took me up to where she was sitting, and said— 'Miss Harvey, let me introduce Mr. Ullathorne to you ;' then made off to his next partner. She started as she heard my name. 'Ullathorne,' she said, 'surely you are not *the* Mr. Ullathorne ?' 'I don't know what you mean by *the* Mr. Ullathorne,' I replied, 'but I don't think there are many of the name in town.'

" 'You are very modest,' she replied, laughing. 'I certainly don't live much in the world, but one must be a savage indeed not to have heard of *you*.' As she spoke she raised her eyes and looked me full in the face. Heavens ! what eyes she had ! I had looked into many a lovely pair before—indeed they are the commonest of all beauties—but I have never seen any which in the least resembled hers. They looked like a flame seen through a thin piece of yellow tortoise-shell. You may think I exaggerate, but I assure you that to the best of my belief they were absolutely golden. It took me more than a moment to recover from the dazzling effect of the first glance, and when I, if I may say so, came to myself, she was speaking again. 'Mr. Saunders never told me that he knew you.'

“ ‘He does not,’ I replied ; ‘in fact, I am here by the merest accident, and he did me a great service in smoothing the way for my admission, and a greater one,’ I added mentally, ‘when he introduced me to you.’

“ ‘Won’t you sit down?’ she said, moving her dress to make room for me on the bench beside her. I answered by offering her my arm. ‘I was just going to propose finding a quiet seat outside the room—the band is making such a noise that conversation is almost impossible—will you come?’ She rose and we left the ball-room together. Unlike most balls given in a public building, there were plenty of places, and comfortable places too, to sit out in ; one in particular, a sort of curtained recess, with two specially comfortable chairs just visible behind the looped-up curtain. Unfortunately the occupants of the chairs looked as if they did not intend to move for some time to come. However, we found two seats a little further on, and as soon as we were settled I asked my companion who was giving the ball.

“ ‘It is not “given” at all in the ordinary sense,’ she replied. ‘It is a private subscription ball, got up chiefly by business men of the Bohemian class. A good many of the people seem to be foreigners. I fancy this is

only one of a series—but really I am almost as much a stranger here as you.’

“ ‘Indeed? then I suppose you can’t tell me the names of the company? I was hoping you would give me a regular *carte du pays*.’

“ ‘I am afraid I cannot. I only came here to-night because Mr. Saunders was so very anxious that I should.’ I felt that I could have strangled Saunders. ‘The fact is,’ she continued, ‘he wanted me to meet his *fiancée*.’ I begged Saunders’ pardon in my heart for the injustice I had done him.

“ ‘Really!’ I said; ‘which is the young lady?’ ‘She isn’t here after all,’ replied Miss Harvey; ‘isn’t it provoking? She had such a bad headache she could not come. I should never have been here except for such an inducement as that, for to tell you the truth,’—she glanced at me doubtfully, as if wondering whether she would offend me,—‘I don’t really approve of subscription balls.’ ‘Neither do I—in theory,’ I replied. ‘So that the only people I know,’ she went on, ‘are the lady I came with and Mr. Saunders; and I don’t like having people introduced to me, for I don’t feel up to dancing. I am so glad you insisted, for I really was beginning to feel rather dull and lonely.’

“ ‘She looked at me so winningly as she spoke,

that I could not help drawing my chair a little bit closer to her. 'It was a very fortunate accident which brought me here,' I said inconsequentially. She did not seem to notice my remark, and continued—'As for feeling lonely, I must get used to that, now,'—her voice took a note of deep sadness,—'for my brother, who has always lived with me, has just sailed for Australia.' 'Do you mean to say that you live quite alone?' I asked. 'Yes,' she replied; 'I am the unprotected woman you read about in the newspaper—who works for her living.' 'A lady for whom I have always entertained the deepest admiration and respect,' I replied, moving my chair back to its old position. 'Is it an impertinent question to ask your profession?' 'Not at all,' she replied. 'I am an artist—or rather a pictorial journalist—for I seldom aspire to anything higher than illustrating the magazines. I don't like it, of course; few women like meeting men on equal terms, but unfortunately, whether we work or not, modern women will never get treated with the respect their grandmothers thought their due; the age of chivalry is dead!'

"'There you are wrong,' I answered. I know myself of men who are as willing and eager to act the part of knight-errant as ever

their ancestors were ; who, in fact, bind themselves by oaths to rescue the oppressed whenever and wherever they come across them.' 'It is possible,' she said, rather wearily ; 'but *I*, at any rate, have never met those men.' She rose as she spoke, and then added in a lighter tone, 'And now I must ask you to take me back to the ball-room, I hear the music beginning again, and I have promised to sit out this dance with Mr. Saunders. Please pity me. I *know* he will talk of nothing on earth but his *fiancée*, and it is impossible to stop him when he once gets on to the subject.'

" 'I can suggest a very easy way of stopping him—tell him you are engaged for the next dance, and dance it or sit it out with me.' 'Very well,' she answered ; and at that moment Saunders came up to claim her, and with a slight bow she left me.

The dance seemed interminable. I had never known a quarter of an hour pass so slowly before. At last it ended, and the interval between it and the next one passed too. This was the first of the supper dances, and the room was comparatively empty. Time went on, but there was no sign of Miss Harvey. I posted myself near the door so as to catch the first glimpse of her ; but still she did not

come, and the dance came to an end without my seeing anything of her. I felt horribly disgusted, and adjourned to the supper-room. Here I found the company a little inclined to be noisy. 'Artists and actors !' I said to myself. I got to the buffet and had some champagne, which, contrary to my expectation, was excellent ; and amused myself by listening to the remarks of two Frenchmen near me who were apparently commenting on the behaviour of a young lady in white who was 'going on' in a manner which might be open to objection.

"*Voilà la belle Marguérite qui fait l'ingénue,*' said the first ; '*mon Dieu, que c'est amusant !*' If that was their idea of '*faire l'ingénue,*' it was not mine ; but the other one replied in perfect good faith, '*C'est le diable en ange ; mais enfin pour ma part je voudrais plutôt.*'

"I heard no more, for at that moment Saunders and Miss Harvey stood before me. 'We have come to make our peace,' said the former. 'Yes,' interrupted Miss Harvey, 'I am so sorry, but it was all Mr. Saunders' fault.' 'I acknowledge it,' replied Saunders, 'but when I begin to talk upon a certain subject there is no stopping me.' 'I will forgive you freely,' I replied, 'if Miss Harvey will only give me the next dance instead of

the one we've missed.' 'Willingly,' she answered. 'All right,' said Saunders, 'then I will leave you together.'

" 'Well,' I asked, as he vanished in the crowd, 'were you much bored?' 'Not a bit,' she answered, 'I did not listen—I was thinking—' She stopped abruptly, and for one long moment our eyes met and held each other. She broke the spell with a laugh of forced gaiety. 'Yes, thinking! one should never allow oneself to think, should one? Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die! How tempting the music sounds!' By this time we had reached the ball-room. 'Suppose I break through my rule and we dance this?'

" 'But I thought you were too tired,' I objected. 'Oh no,' she said, 'I am only *mentally* tired. I feel as if I *must* waltz, and the room is so beautifully clear.' I said no more, but putting my arm round her we glided off on the smooth oak floor. I have met with plenty of good dancers, but I confess that her waltzing was a revelation to me—it had such an extraordinary go about it that I felt as if the music were getting into my head, and I should have liked to have gone on for ever. It was a wild Hungarian waltz tune, and the musicians played it ever faster and

faster, and faster and faster we whirled, her slight form clinging to me, till suddenly with a crash the music stopped and left us in the middle of the room. I rushed out rather rudely and violently to make sure of the two arm-chairs behind the curtain. They were empty, and as Miss Harvey followed me into the recess, her dress caught in the cord which looped back the curtain; the latter got unhooked, and the heavy curtain fell behind us, cutting off from the rest of the world. By the faint light of the Chinese lantern, I could see that she was flushed by such rapid movement. 'I hope it hasn't tired you,' I said anxiously.

"'Oh no,' she answered, leaning back in her great chair and still panting a little. 'Oh no; don't you wish it could have lasted for ever?' She looked up, and paled suddenly as her eyes met mine. I felt my self-possession go in the dazzle of that glance as I answered, 'For ever—yes, with *you*!' and I bent over her nearer and nearer. She did not move, but gazed up at me, very pale, but still as a bird fascinated by a snake—nearer and nearer—when suddenly a gloved hand thrust the curtain a little aside, and then quickly dropped it again, with an insolent laugh, and a voice cried, 'Oh! a thousand pardons!' and the man went off whistling a jaunty air. Where had I heard

that tune before? Suddenly I remembered. I saw the stage of the Haymarket before me, and heard Luversan's hoarse mocking voice singing—

‘Plaisir d’amour ne dure qu’un moment,
Chagrin d’amour dure toute la vie.’

“I felt inclined to strangle the fellow, and I said abruptly to my companion, ‘Do you know who that was?’ ‘No,’ she replied. ‘I did not even see his face.’ I felt utterly ashamed of myself. Was this the behaviour of a man who was bound by an oath as a modern knight-errant? I sat down again in my chair, determined to get the better of myself; and after a moment’s pause I said in a formal voice, ‘And so you are very fond of dancing?’ ‘I am not likely to enjoy much more of it,’ she answered gloomily; then with a start added, ‘No! I did not mean to say that.’ ‘Why,’ I said, ‘are you going to become a nun?’ ‘A nun?’ she said; ‘no, no. I would to heaven I were.’ ‘What do you mean?’ I cried, for her vehemence frightened me. ‘I mean,’ she said, ‘that in a week or less I shall be——No, no. I won’t tell you—you of all men. For this one night you shall think of me as you have thought hitherto—you will know the truth quite soon enough.’

‘I shall know the truth?’ I said; ‘how does your future affect me? Are we not utter strangers?’ ‘I am to you,’ she answered, ‘but not you to me; you will hear all to-morrow.’ ‘Hear all?’ I repeated in utter bewilderment. ‘No, I will not be kept in suspense—you *shall* tell me what you mean.’

“‘Well, then,’—she spoke in a hard desperate voice,—‘since you *will* hear, know that very soon the woman who speaks to you now will be lying in prison, a convicted criminal.’ ‘My God!’ ‘I had to choose between my honour and a prison; I chose a prison. Oh!’ she cried, suddenly breaking down, ‘it would all be easy were it not *your* hand which is to place me there.’

“‘*My* hand?’

“‘Yes. I have told you so much that now I will tell you all; and even you, whom I have wronged, will feel for me a little.’ I felt in a dream as I composed myself to listen, and in a low passionless voice she began her story:—

“‘My brother Rupert—who, as I told you, has just sailed for Australia—was a clerk in a private bank in the Strand. He and I led a very quiet life together in our little lodging; he always had his evenings to himself, and would often take me to concerts, etc. One

night he brought home some books, and said that there was such a press of work at the office he had had no time to finish them. In the morning he left the books behind him; I found them, and knowing how important it was he should have them at once, I took them myself to the bank. There I saw the head of the firm—Mr. Brewer—and from that moment my happiness was destroyed. Mr. Brewer got Rupert to bring him to see me, and then came to the house morning, noon, and night. I used to go to my own room whenever I could, but often I was forced to receive him. I did not dare offend him, for Rupert's daily bread depended on him. At last, one day he made me a proposal—no! not even now can I tell you what it was. You can imagine my answer, and he left me looking like a whipped hound, but vowing vengeance.

“ ‘Soon after that I noticed that Rupert began to spend his evenings away from me; he used to come home very late, and be gloomy and depressed in the morning. One day, after this had been going on for about six months, Mr. Brewer stopped me in the road and told me that if I wished to save my brother, I must grant him an interview that afternoon. I hesitated; but at last, on his dropping frightful hints about Rupert, I consented.

When he came he told me, what I had feared for a long time, that Rupert had taken to gambling, and he showed me I.O.U.'s of his to the amount of £1165. This was not all. For some time, Mr. Brewer said, he himself had been missing small sums of money, and at last he had had thirty-five sovereigns marked, and had put them in a place where—if the thief were one of the clerks in the bank—he could easily find them. The marked gold was found in Rupert's desk. He could produce witnesses to prove this. Would I save my brother?—there was only one way.

“‘I was bewildered with horror, but it flashed through my mind that the great thing was to gain time. After a pause I told him that the only promise I would give would be, if he allowed my brother to escape prosecution, to engage either to pay the money or to accede to his wishes. He said that he did not want the money; but I was firm, and told him that if he did not consent to this arrangement, justice must take its course. At last he consented, saying that I was as likely to be able to get £1200 as he was to be able to pay the National Debt. In the event of the other contingency taking place, he had the audacity to say that he should consider me the entire mistress of his house and fortune, and that he

would be only too glad to make me his wife, if he had not the misfortune to be married already. This happened last Monday. Thursday was the day appointed for the bargain to be fulfilled, at four in the afternoon. Till then he warned me that both Rupert and I should be watched by detectives. My plan was this:—to take a passage for Rupert in a ship starting from London for New Zealand on the Thursday afternoon; to go with Mr. Brewer to his house, and there, as my feet crossed his threshold, knowing that Rupert was safe, to take such a dose of poison as should cancel the bargain.

“‘I wrote to Mr. Saunders asking him to take Rupert’s passage. By the last post on Tuesday night I received an answer from him saying that as no ship started for New Zealand till Friday morning, he had taken Rupert’s passage for then. My plan had failed, and I felt in utter despair. By the same post I received a letter from a lady friend of yours—’

“‘Of mine!’ I ejaculated; ‘how do you know that?’

“‘I told you that I was an artist,’ answered Miss Harvey, ‘and this lady, whose name I am bound in honour not to reveal, had sent me your photograph with a commission to paint a miniature of you from it. Your signature was

on the back. A sudden thought struck me. What if I forged your name for the sum I needed? At four o'clock I knew that the banks were closed, and to-day being Bank Holiday, the cheque could not be presented till to-morrow morning, and by that time Rupert would be safe. I had one of those cheques with the name of the banker left blank. I filled this in with the name of your own bank, and traced your signature upon it. I gave this to Mr. Brewer—the forgery's obvious to any one who knows your signature—the cheque will be presented as soon as the bank opens to-morrow, or rather, 'looking at the clock, *this* morning, and by the evening I——oh, my God! how shall I bear it!'

"Her voice, which had been cold and hard through the whole of her pitiful story, broke, and she burst into a passion of tears. 'Miss Harvey,' I said, steadying my voice as well as I could, 'you shall not be called upon for such a frightful sacrifice—your cheque shall be honoured.'

"'Honoured!' she cried, 'what do you mean?' 'I mean,' I answered, 'that I will myself see that the £1200 is handed to that man's messenger to-morrow morning.' 'Oh, no, no,' she said, 'I cannot take your money.' 'Very well,' I answered, 'I will not ask you to,

it shall be merely a loan, and you shall repay me at your leisure.'

" 'Oh,' she cried, 'do you really mean it? Do you really mean that this horrible thing is to pass away from me, that I am to be free? Oh, how can I thank you enough?' 'By saying as little as you can about it,' I answered. 'Good heavens! what a scoundrel that fellow must be.' 'But,' she said, 'I don't see how you can do it—how can you tell that I am not the vilest of impostors? I cannot take you to my home to-night, or even before ten to-morrow morning. How can you trust me?'

" I laid my hand on hers for a moment, and looking straight into her eyes, said, 'I can trust you.' She gave me her address—203, Westmoreland Avenue, Maida Vale—and we settled that I was to go and see her the moment I had paid the cheque, to tell her what had happened, and to receive her note of hand for the amount.

" 'And now,' I said, 'we must say good-night, it is getting fearfully late, and we both must have *some* sleep before to-morrow.' 'Good-night,' she said, half reluctantly, 'good-night; perhaps I may be able to thank you to-morrow, at present I cannot.' 'Good-night,' I said, holding her hand in mine, and gazing down at her; and then, fearful of saying

more than I ought, I dropped it suddenly and left her.

“When I got home I found to my great annoyance that I had lost the piece of paper which, in accordance with the club rules, I had in my great-coat pocket, bearing my signature, and directing that in the event of my dead body being found, it was to be brought here. I was much vexed, for it must have looked so foolish to any person who found it in the cloak-room at the ball. This morning I of course proceeded to the bank, and made the necessary arrangements for meeting the cheque without an event so singular being noticed in the bank. It was past ten before it was presented, and eleven before I could get away. I then sent the telegram which you received, stating that I could not be here till twelve, and then I started for Westmoreland Avenue. I drove up to the door, and instead of seeing Miss Harvey, was greeted by this announcement, printed on a board in the dusty cracked dining-room window—

‘THIS HOUSE TO BE LET UNFURNISHED,
OR SOLD.’

“I rang the bell violently—there was no answer, the house was utterly deserted.”

The President ceased speaking, and Mr. Wilmot said—

“It is clear that you have been the victim of one of the cleverest and most impudent conspiracies of modern times. From the description of ‘Miss Harvey,’ I am sure that she is the celebrated ‘golden-eyed creole, Fanny Duval, *alias* Margo Vane,’ who, with her Yankee protector—obviously Mr. Saunders—was so deeply implicated in the Denver Gold Dust Robbery.”

“It is possible,” said Ullathorne, “but I do not see how my signature was obtained, or indeed how and when the conspiracy was organized.”

“I think I can explain,” said Wilmot. “Saunders admitted you in the first instance on hearing your name, in the hope that he or his confederate, Fanny, could devise some means of swindling you. In her first conversation with you, Fanny tried to find out what sort of man she had to deal with. Finding that the chivalrous side of your nature was most accessible, she and Saunders, during the long time they were absent together, concocted the story which she subsequently told you. Whilst she was telling it, Saunders, who had himself given you the ticket for your great-coat, and therefore knew the number, searched

your pockets and found your signature. On the finding of that signature the whole scheme depended. They found it, and the knavish conspiracy was crowned with complete success."

THE FOREMAN OF THE JURY.

HENRY KING was a man verging on forty years of age, a period of life when experience usually begins to get the better of curiosity, and the desire for comfort that for adventure. Henry King was, however, an exception. He had still the keen appetite of a boy for adventure, combined with the cool head and settled courage of a grown man.

In early life he had been in the merchant-service, not so much from necessity as from the old boyish ambition, almost obsolete in these luxurious days, to go to sea. Later, he had served in the army and in the "rough-and-tumble" campaigns of one of the South American Republics, where he had managed to lose two fingers of his right hand, though, fortunately, not the forefinger or thumb. He had also tried ranching in the United States, but was recalled to England by the news of the death of his father, a man in a large

business connected with the export trade in the city of London.

This death put Henry King in the position of a very rich man, and made it his duty to try and carry on the business, which he did for some time, by aid of his general experience and quick brains, and the advice of old and trusted managers and clerks; but he became aware, ere long, that a regular life—consisting of daily journeys from Kensington to the Mansion House, lunch in the city, and back again at six from the Mansion House to Kensington—was not suited to his tastes. Having no desire to accumulate further wealth, and wishing to be unfettered by the responsibility of a large “going concern,” he parted with his interest in it for a satisfactory price, and set himself to more varied and congenial occupations, among which the pursuits of the Adventurers’ Club took a leading place.

He was a powerful man, of about five feet ten, had the ready hands and cat-like activity of a sailor, with the upright figure, square shoulders, trim moustache, and clipped hair of a soldier, and the steady eyes and bronzed complexion of both. He could play cards or chess, carve wood, mend a kettle, or splice a rope, with equal skill. So much for his personality.

When the usual ceremony with the map took place, the particular district "King Harry" (as the members facetiously called him) chanced to appropriate was the Borough. He laughed and remarked—

"Don't know much about it, except that Pickwick used to put up there, and Mrs. Hardcastle considered it a resort of the nobility. I suppose I'd better waste no more time now it's settled. I'll take a cab to Charing Cross, and then take the train to London Bridge by Cannon Street. Waiter!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Go and get my overcoat and hat and stick. Well, good-night, boys."

"Good-night, King Hal, and good sport."

"Give me a light, somebody. Thanks. What an awful time that waiter is. He is always longer over my coat than any one else's. Thinks my pockets more worth rummaging than the other Johnnies' perhaps. Wrong though! Ah, here he is at last. Good-night again, boys."

And he ran down-stairs and hailed the first of the many hansoms which crawl by night in Regent Street.

And this was Henry King's story:—

"At Charing Cross Station there were, as usual, a large number of people, part pas-

sengers, part persons keeping appointments 'under the clock,' or roaming to gratify curiosity. I took a ticket to London Bridge. It was a little after eleven, and a good many people were hurrying along to take the train in order to catch the homeward suburban trains at London Bridge. Thanks, however, to my first-class ticket, I found myself in a compartment with no other passenger, until the train was just on the move, when a young lady ran alongside and was helped in by a porter, who banged the door after her. She sat in the corner opposite to, and remote from, myself, and seemed out of breath. I managed to get a look at her in, I hope, an unobtrusive manner, and she glanced in a nervous, hurried way at me, and instantly looked away.

"The object of my curiosity wore a little round black hat coming down rather to a point on the forehead, with two little white wings sticking up at the back mixed up ingeniously with black velvet, a black jacket with braid on it, a black cashmere skirt, neat gloves and boots, an umbrella with a black handle, and she held a purse in her hand. Judging from the small fragments of 'fringe' showing under the hat, she had dark hair. Her face was pretty, with rather an aquiline nose, and she had a rich complexion and large

eyes—the kind of pretty face suited to the outside page of a popular waltz, or the lid of a chocolate box. I should put her down to be six or seven and twenty, and most likely a dressmaker or girl from a shop. It was too early for theatre girls; and besides, she was too quiet-looking and dressed too cheap. Governess, perchance, I thought, going to catch a train to Sydenham or Penge. Then I reflected that I was not out to look for pretty faces, but to seek an adventure. She was pretty though, and looked respectable.

“No other passengers got in at Waterloo or Cannon Street. At London Bridge I got out, as did, of course, the other passengers, among them the young woman. My attention was then attracted for a few minutes by the huge capitals on the placards of the evening papers announcing horrible catastrophes in Japan and destructive fire ‘now raging’ in Battersea, in hopes of a hint for my adventure. Japan and Battersea being, however, both remote from my immediate path, I paid no further attention to them, and strolled out of the station and took the narrow lane leading leftwards down the slope to the Borough High Street, and in that narrow and, at that time, solitary lane, I again saw my fellow-passenger, walking quickly before me. You

can suppose I had no idea of following her, or behaving in any way unbecoming to a member of this club; but I do not mind admitting that I just noticed her, and wondered a little if she had enjoyed herself, and was speculating on what her home was like, when a rough fellow, with close-cropped hair and a suit of some one else's clothes, made a grab at the purse she was carrying in her hand. She held on to it, and struggled, and uttered a low cry, which I of course heard. The ruffian, as far as could be seen in the foggy light—it should be said that the atmosphere was far from clear that night—gave her a blow on the wrist which made her drop the purse, but before he could pick it up again I was by her side and just had time to deal the thief a blow on the jaw, which caused him to fall sideways in the mud. The malefactor then picked himself up, and ran away into the fog, disappearing round the turning to the left, which leads into the Borough High Street.

“Now I would have run after him, but for two reasons—first, that a chase in a fog in strange streets would be almost hopeless; and, secondly, that I did not like to leave the girl, who was in an excited, almost hysterical, condition, and stood there sobbing without making

an attempt to pick up her purse, which lay upon the ground.

“‘Now,’ I thought, ‘the adventure is beginning, though perhaps in rather a commonplace way,’ as I picked up the purse. ‘If this is to be all, though, the adventure does not promise to amount to much.’ I handed it to her, and said—

“‘There, don’t cry. It’s all right now. You haven’t lost it, after all.’

“‘Oh, thank you; thank you so much.’

“‘Not at all. No trouble. But won’t you come back to the station and sit down and have a cup of tea, or rest, or something of that sort? You seem rather put out.’

“‘Oh, I’m quite well now, thank you. It’s very silly of me. But I can go home all right now.’

“‘Is it far?’

“‘No—not very.’

“‘You’d better let me see you to the house.’

“‘It’s not at all necessary, thank you.’

“‘Yes, it is. I’ve nothing particular to do, and I’d not be satisfied unless I left you in the hands of your friends safely now. This seems to be what they call in America a pretty tough place.’

“‘Oh, I’m only going down High Street. Don’t you mind.’

“ ‘I’m going down High Street too, and I don’t mind the least. Come along.’ ”

“ She silently consented, by setting out on her way, and appeared not to be really unwilling to accept an escort.

“ I learned that she was employed in a shop in the neighbourhood, and lived with her father, to whom she was now going, having been with another girl to see a melodrama at the Adelphi, for which some one had given her a couple of passes.

“ I observed that she displayed no Cockney accent, had a modest demeanour, and appeared to have acquired more education than young women who assist in South London shops usually possess.

“ She probably noticed that I was a large and ugly man, with a cool way of saying ridiculous things in an American accent. At any rate, I hoped I did not appear to make the slightest attempt to ‘mash,’ or, in short, to display any vulgarity whatever. I know I tried to set her at her ease, and adopt what I may describe as an elderly manner, though with what success I do not pretend to say.

“ I also tried to be lively and cheerful, in order to put the recent unpleasant experience out of her head. She seemed to become more depressed and anxious-looking the longer

we talked and the more she saw of me. At last she said—‘Really, it isn’t worth while for you to see me further,’ as we walked between the tall ancient houses of the High Street, mysterious in the fog and the glare of gas, and the red reflections the naphtha lamps cast on the wheel-sellers and costermongers’ barrows near the Borough Market.

“‘Well, I’m going, any way,’ I replied, ‘until I see you at your door; so you must put up with me till then.’

“‘Well, if you must, I suppose you must,’ she answered, with an air of resignation that I thought hardly complimentary, though perhaps natural. ‘We turn up here,’ she said in a few minutes, and we entered a passage on the left, proceeded for about thirty feet in a straight line, turned to the right about ten feet further, and then to the left again. I observed we were in a long paved court, about twelve feet wide, with a row of tall, shabby brick houses on the left, and a high soot-brown wall on the right. How far this court extended, or how it ended, the fog and darkness prevented me from seeing. She stopped at the third door, and I saw that the front room on the ground floor had closed outer shutters, with circular holes about four inches in diameter at the top, through which a dim light came. She knocked at the door.

“‘They don’t give you a latch-key then, when you go out pleasuring?’

“‘No. Father doesn’t approve of it. He sits up.’

“The door was opened by a man who seemed elderly, though it was difficult to see his features.

“‘That you, Mary?’

“‘Yes, father.’ (‘So you’re Mary, are you!’ was my mental note.)

“‘Why, who is that?’

“‘This is a gentleman who protected me from being robbed, and he insisted on seeing me safe here,’ replied Mary, in rather a tremulous voice.

“‘Will you step in, sir, to my humble dwelling, that I may see your face and give you such thanks as are in my power?’

“I hesitated. ‘Well—all right. No thanks needed. I only did what any fellow would have done.’ And then I went in. The elderly man shut the outer door and ushered me into the ground-floor room, which was somewhat scantily furnished as a sitting-room, with a small square table covered by a coarse but clean cloth, and a supper consisting of a lump of pressed beef which had evidently come out of a tin, a long loaf of German bread, pickled onions, butter, cheese, and a jug of draught

stout. On a chest of drawers covered with books burned a paraffin lamp with a white shade, which, with the pickles and cheese, imparted a curious flavour to the atmosphere so well known in the poorer dwellings of London.

“I was invited to sit down and tell what had occurred, which I related, I hope, in a matter-of-fact way, abstaining from treating such an affair as important.

“The elderly man seemed, however, inclined to regard it in that light. He said—‘You have saved a poor girl from losing the week’s earnings she was bringing home to her old father. That may be trivial to you, but it is serious to such as me. May I ask your name, sir? Mine is Meredith. We have seen more prosperous days, Mary and I, and I used once to call myself a gentleman, but it would be ridiculous to do so now.’

“‘My name is King. I’m very glad to have done anything for you, I’m sure.’

“‘You have done more than you think for me. Mary, go and take your hat off, and we will have supper. I hardly dare ask such as you to share our humble repast, sir.’

“Now, not wishing of course to hurt the fellow’s feelings, I replied—‘Not at all. I shall be delighted. I’ve got awfully hungry

within the last hour or two. I think punching that boulder's head has given me an appetite. But would you be offended if I suggested a bottle of wine? Let's look on it as a contributory picnic, don't you know.'

" 'I'm not proud enough to say no. Wine and we have long been strangers. There is, I believe, good wine at the Cross Keys, in the High Street.'

" 'All right, I'll go and order it.'

" 'On no account. Mary shall go. She is used to going for the beer. We keep no servant, and we do not send our guests out for things—when we have the rare privilege of having a guest.' Mary re-entered.

" 'Oh, very well. Here's a sovereign; and, Miss Meredith, will you ask for a bottle of Heidsieck's Dry Monopole then? I'm ashamed to let you go.'

" 'Let it be, let it be, Mr. King.'

" Mary soon came back with the bottle of champagne wrapped in brown paper, and put the change out of the sovereign on the table near me. Then she put her hat on the chest of drawers where the lamp stood, looked in the dirty gilt-framed mirror over the mantel-shelf, and proceeded to cut three pieces off the long loaf of bread, glancing occasionally at me, who was probably more visible to her now in

the light of the lamp, and her glance seemed to convey a sort of nervous regret very likely that people who ordered champagne came so seldom into the paltry programme of her plodding life—perhaps not, who can tell?

“‘Now, Mr. King, let us take supper. Mary, child, place a chair for Mr. King. For what we are about to receive, etc. It’s not much, sir, but we do well to be thankful for it.’

“And they ate. I confess I performed like a starved survivor from a shipwreck, Mr. Meredith moderately, and Mary hardly at all. Then I opened the champagne with my knife, and filling three tumblers, said—

“‘Mr. Meredith and Miss Meredith, here’s your good health. Thank you for your hospitality.’

“Mr. Meredith bowed, and drank gravely. Mary drank a little, and relapsed into thoughtful melancholy.

“‘You look tired and upset, Mary, you had better go to bed; it is well past midnight.’

“‘I think I will. Good-night, father. Good-bye, Mr. King.’

“I naturally rose to open the door for her, and held out my hand. She hesitated, then suddenly seized it, and after pressing it rather hard, ran up-stairs into the darkness. I came back to the table and looked at my host—a

man probably fifty, with dark grizzling hair thin at the top, a short, pointed beard, Semitic features, and gold spectacles.

“ ‘Now, Mr. Meredith, we’ll finish the bottle over a pipe, if you’ll allow me, and then I will say good-night too. Do you know I’ve been thinking that I must have met you before somewhere? Your face seems dimly familiar, and yet I can’t place you. I’ve been in so many places, and seen so many people one way and another, that that is very natural however.’

“The man’s manner and tone changed slightly, and he replied politely, but rather sternly, with none of the humility of his earlier manner—

“ ‘Mr. King, I will tell you where you last saw me, and when. You had some offices in the city, some years ago?’

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘At that time you were called upon to serve on a jury at the Old Bailey. You were elected foreman. When my Lord said, “Are you agreed, gentlemen, upon your verdict?” it was your business to reply—“We are, my Lord.” There were, on that occasion, two men tried for being, with others, concerned in causing an explosion by means of dynamite at the Home Office. I was one, in the name of Lipmann. An American called Connelly was

the other. You, in your wisdom and *bourgeois* respectability, found us guilty, and I remember you well. I served part of my ten years, and on account of my good behaviour, bad health, and sincere repentance, as testified to by the chaplain, got out sooner than I expected. Connelly stayed longer, but he is out now also, and anxious to thank you for his eight wasted years.'

" 'I am amazed, Mr. Lipmann, and distressed. How strange! After all, I couldn't help it. I am not disputing the sincerity of your political convictions, but you know we really can't stand being blown up for anybody's convictions.'

" 'Wait a bit. A year ago or less, I accidentally heard of you from one of our friends, who happens to be a waiter at that Adventurers' Club of yours. He brought me where I could see you, and I recognized you directly. Then I waited for chance to send you wild-goose chasing in this direction. Anton always told me where you were going before you started, while you thought he was getting your overcoat, and time after time I have been disappointed by your going somewhere where I had no means of controlling your movements. I have often attempted the ordinary tricks, when you were out at night, of setting people to enter into conversation with you at bars or

music-halls, and such like, but it never succeeded. But at last you have been delivered into my hands. Mary, who is no daughter of mine, but one of *us*, who simply obeys my orders, got into your train by instructions. The man who pretended to rob her was Connelly, and did so by instructions. He will like you all the better for having knocked him down, I doubt not.'

" 'All a plant, by Jove !' I exclaimed.

" 'Every bit. You see you may get more adventure than you bargain for, when you wander out in search of it.'

" 'Well, what next ?'

" 'Well, I propose that you should subscribe a thousand pounds to our funds, by way of paying for the years of our lives you wasted in sending us to "do time," for one thing.'

" 'You have calm cheek, Mr. Lipmann, *alias* Meredith,' replied I, not taking the trouble to move, and leaning back in my chair. 'And suppose I tell you to go to the devil ?'

" 'Wal,' said a voice from the ceiling, 'I believe there'd be a chance of your goin' there first, Mister.'

" I looked up, and saw an open square hole above me, and looking through it the grinning face of the man I had knocked down, and a hand covering me with a revolver.

“‘Don’t move on any account,’ said Mr. Lipmann, producing another revolver.

“‘The adventure is coming off,’ I reflected; ‘it is coming off distinctly.’

“‘Don’t imagine,’ continued Mr. Lipmann, ‘that if we fire these it will alarm the neighbours. They are accustomed to rows, and sleep sound. Moreover, we have taken advantage of that excellent invention, the noiseless and smokeless powder, of which the recipe was kindly stolen for us by a sympathetic deserter from the Imperial German Arsenal at Spandau.’

“‘Very ingenious,’ I replied, wondering what I had better do next.

“‘Wasn’t it? Connelly is a very good shot, and the range is not great, so I will leave him to cover you, while I put these nice steel bangles on.’ And Mr. Lipmann clasped them round my wrists, saying, ‘I am sorry if they are a little tight, but you should not have such large wrists. I don’t think I would struggle,’ he continued, in a soothing voice, like a nurse to a child, ‘because Connelly’s six-shooter might go off. That’s right. Now I will put this bit of rope round your ankles, and this nice soft comfortable gag in your mouth; and fasten it in a bow at the back—so, quite easy, I hope? Now I will cover you with my pistol,

while Connelly comes down. Now, Connelly, take his head while I bind the knees. Now up-stairs with him.'

"And up-stairs I was carried, and laid upon an iron bedstead in the room above, where the two miscreants proceeded to overhaul my things. Then they tied me on to the bedstead, and Mr. Lipmann, taking the candle they had lit off the floor, and placing it on the mantelpiece, addressed these remarks to the victim of a thirst for adventure.

" 'Now, Mr. King, attend !'

"Connelly stood behind Lipmann, a strongly-built brute, with a round head, small eyes, and a reddish thick moustache cut along the lower line to clear the mouth. There was a mark on one side of his face where I had hit him, as I was consoled to observe.

" 'As the Banks do not open till nine to-morrow morning, we propose giving you some time to rest and reflect upon your critical position. As your Bank is a long way off—I believe the South Kensington Branch—I shall have to bring you to a decision rather early, especially as there is a thick fog which will impede traffic and cause delay. These are the terms :—If, by seven to-morrow morning, you do not consent to sign a cheque (blank paper with a penny stamp is good enough) payable to bearer for

one thousand pounds, we shall use the electro-pathic appliances, which patients of languid or irresolute habit find extremely stimulating. You observe that wires are attached to the two posts at the foot of the iron bedstead on which you lie. These wires (carefully insulated, as you see) proceed to the room below, and are in connection with a sufficient supply of Ohms and Volts to make this bed you lie on red-hot, if necessary. One has only to turn the key to the right or left to close the circuit. Now such a course would, if adopted, be likely—almost certain—to cause you great pain and annoyance, and then you would die, which nobody but a fool ever wants to do, and you are no fool, except that you belong to the Adventurers' Club. In the meantime, should you decide to accede to our wishes, you can tap the handcuffs together three separate times, and whoever is down-stairs will hear, and bring you writing materials. Is that right, Connelly ?'

“ ‘Indeed it is.’

“ ‘Then I will leave you to “consider your verdict,” Mr. Foreman. Come along, Connelly.’

“ And the two brutes left the room, and went down-stairs, and I heard them sitting down in the apartment below, and the sound of a kettle being put on the fire. It was a tight

situation truly, especially about the wrists. Elegantly landed I had been too, for an old hand. Question arises, as I lay on the bedstead I thought, 'If I cave in and pay, shall I get out?' In any case it would be doubtful, for those beasts know I would bring in the nearest bobby in five minutes; besides, it would be humiliating to tell the story to the club to-morrow. No, I'll trust to my luck and brains, which generally pull me through. Any way, I'll take a nap, and then I'll be more up to the mark. Deuced uncomfortable this bedstead! Never mind, I've slept in worse places.' And then I soon fell into a kind of uncomfortable doze, and dreamed fitfully of unpleasant things.

"After a time, I know not how long, a hand touched me, and I woke. It was the girl Mary, who had entered the room, dressed as I had seen her, but without her boots. She unfastened and removed the gag, and untied the ropes on my legs. I spoke never a word, but looked significantly at my wrists. She shook her head, and taking a piece of paper, wrote on it with a pencil—

"'They open with a key. I dare not do any more. You must manage the rest yourself.'

"I made a motion with my finger for

the pencil. She held the handcuffs so that they should not clink while I wrote—‘Is the front door any good?’ She shook her head. I thought a long time, she still holding my left hand and the links, and gazing down at my face with a remorseful sort of look. Then I wrote—‘Can I go if I pay?’ She wrote in reply—‘No. Lipmann means to leave you here to starve if he gets the money.’

“I pondered again a while, then wrote—‘How high, the wall over the way? What on other side?’ She understood.

“‘Higher than this window. Churchyard outside. This place was the Marshalsea Prison once.’

“I wrote—‘Is the top of wall lower than window above? Can I go up-stairs? I will jump on wall.’

“She nodded twice, and then wrote—

“‘But if I let you out from my room they will kill me.’ I nodded and wrote—

“‘Right. Go away now, and come again when Lipmann has gone with my cheque. See?’ Mary smiled and nodded. I wrote—

“‘Now, that’s a broth of a girl. I won’t get you in a scrape if I can help it, and will give that filthy Jew fifts before I’ve done with him. Look here, you just tie these ropes on again,

tight as you please, and replace the gag. I know what to do.'

"Mary did as she was instructed, and went, but before she went she kissed the helpless Adventurer on the forehead. When she had had time to get up-stairs, I made the preconcerted signal with the handcuffs, and Lipmann and Connelly promptly arrived with a piece of note-paper with a stamp affixed and a pen and ink. The former ruffian held these for me to write on, while the latter presented the revolver at my head, as it was of course necessary to release my hands. I then wrote a cheque in the usual phraseology for one thousand pounds to bearer, but signed it in a manner entirely different from the signature to which the Bank was accustomed.

" 'Thank you, Mr. King. I need hardly add that you will stay here till I have returned with the cash, in case you have tried any tricks with the signature.'

"And they re-handcuffed me and departed.

"I chuckled, for I thought—'Lipmann will be detained by Bank for a certainty. That gets rid of one of them. I'll trust a pretty girl to consult sentiments before politics.'

"Between seven and eight Lipmann departed from the house, leaving the door locked behind him and taking the key. Connelly was whist-

ling the 'Wearing of the Green' below, when Mary came in again, with the pencil and a fresh piece of paper. She removed the gag and undid the cords. I then wrote—

“‘Would you mind unlacing and pulling off my boots?’

“She did so with noiseless dexterity. I cautiously got on my feet. She carried the boots, and left the cords and gag on the floor. We both crept up-stairs to her room above. There I asked her in a whisper to put my boots on again for me.

“‘You’ll kill yourself!’ she whispered, as I got on the window-sill.

“‘Not I! It’s very foggy, but I can just see the top of the wall. I can jump that far, and it will be easy falling on the other side. When I’m gone, just take your things off and go to bed, and mind you shut the window again. Good-bye, Mary; I shall never forget you.’

“‘Nor I you. Good-bye.’

“Then I carefully stood upright outside the window, judged the distance, swung my handcuffed arms in the air, and jumped. My feet landed on the top of the wall, and I fell over into the churchyard of St. George the Martyr. I was bruised and dirty, and nearly stunned, but not seriously injured, and after

a time I got up and found my way slowly in the foggy darkness to the gate, which I climbed with some difficulty owing to my manacled hands. I walked quickly along the street till I met a policeman, with whom I went to the nearest station, where I told the inspector on duty briefly the whole story. My handcuffs were removed, a telegram was sent to the Bank, and a sergeant and two constables went, under my guidance, back to the house in Marshalsea Place. When they got there, a sound of voices was heard inside, as of some persons quarrelling. 'Don't waste time!' I said. 'That's that Irish-American's voice, and he'll kill that girl if we don't stop it.' And I just kicked the door in, and rushed in, followed by the sergeant and constables, to see Mary pursued up-stairs by Connelly with a revolver. On seeing the invaders, Connelly darted into the room where I had been imprisoned, and standing on the bed, aimed his pistol at me, and was pulling the trigger when Mary, who had come down-stairs again as far as the door of this room, ran in front of me, holding her arms before my face, and receiving the charge in her body, sank to the floor. The constable rushed at Connelly, who stumbled in his excitement, and, in some mysterious manner, closing the circuit of the

electric current, evidently died instantaneously—a most inattractive object. I warned the police not to touch him or the bed till they had got somebody who understood that sort of thing to stop the current.

“I expect to have to attend two inquests.

“Lipmann will live to do more mischief, though he will be rather older than he is now, I reckon, before he is at liberty to pervade society at large.”

IN THE SLAUGHTER-YARD.

"You seem to have had a lively time of it, Jeaffreson ; at all events you've got something to show for *your* night's adventure," said the President, pointing to the bandaged hand of Mr. Horace Jeaffreson.

"Yes," replied that gentleman, "I've got something to remember last night by ; but I've got something more to show than this bandaged hand that you all stare at so curiously." And then Horace Jeaffreson rose, drew himself up to his full height of six feet one, and exhibited the left side of his closely-buttoned, well-fitting frock-coat. "I should like you to notice that," he said, pointing to a straight, clean cut in the cloth, just on a level with the region of the heart. "When you've heard what I've got to tell, you'll acknowledge that I had a pretty narrow squeak of it last night ; three inches more, and it would have been all up with H. J.

I don't regret it a bit, because I believe that I have been the means of ridding the world of a monster. Time alone will prove whether my supposition is correct," and then Mr. Horace Jeaffreson shuddered. "Before I begin the history of my adventures, there are two objects that I must submit to your inspection; they are in that little parcel that I have laid upon the mantelpiece. Perhaps, as my left hand is disabled, you won't mind undoing the parcel, Mr. President."

He laid a long, narrow parcel upon the table, and the President proceeded to open it. The contents consisted of a policeman's truncheon — branded H 1839 — and a long, narrow-bladed, double-edged knife, having an ebony handle, which was cut in criss-cross ridges. There were stains of blood upon the truncheon, and the knife appeared to have been dipped in a red transparent varnish, of the nature of which there could be no doubt.

"Those are the exhibits," said Horace Jeaffreson. "The slit in my coat, my wounded hand, that truncheon and that blood-stained knife, and a copy of the morning paper, are all the proofs I have to give you that my adventure of last night was not a hideous nightmare dream, or a wildly improbable yarn.

“I must confess that when I placed my forefinger haphazard upon the map last night, and found that fate had given me Whitechapel as my hunting-ground, I was considerably disgusted. I left this place bound for the heart of sordid London, the home of vice, of misery, and crime. Until last night I knew nothing whatever about the East End of London. I’ve never been bitten with the desire to do even the smallest bit of ‘slumming.’ I’m sorry enough for the poor. I’d do all I can to help them in the way of subscribing, and that sort of thing, you know; but actual poverty in the flesh I confess to fighting shy of—it’s a weakness I own, but, so to say, poverty, crass poverty, offends my nostrils. I’m not a snob, but that’s the truth. However, I was in for it; I had got to pass the night in Whitechapel for the sake of what might turn up. A good deal turned up, and a good deal more than I had bargained for.

“‘Shall I wait for you, sir?’ said the cabman, as he pulled up his hansom at the corner of Osborne Street. ‘I’m game to wait, sir, if you won’t be long.’

“But I dismissed him. ‘I shall be here for several hours, my man,’ I said.

“‘You know best, sir,’ said the cabman; ‘every one to his taste. You’d better keep

yer weather-eye open, sir, anyhow ; for the side streets ain't over and above safe about here. If I were you, sir, I'd get a 'copper'¹ to show me round.' And then the man thanked me for a liberal fare, and flicking his horse, drove off.

"But I had come to Whitechapel to seek adventure, something was bound to turn up, and, as a modern Don Quixote, I determined to take my chance alone ; for it wasn't under the protecting wing of a member of the Force that I was likely to come across any very stirring novelty.

"I wandered about the dirty, badly-lighted streets, and I marvelled at the teeming hundreds who thronged the principal thoroughfares. I don't think that ever in my life before I had seen so many hungry, hopeless-looking, anxious-looking people crowded together. They all seemed to be hurrying either to the public-house or from the public-house. Nobody offered to molest me. I'm a fairly big man, and with the exception of having my pockets attempted some half-dozen times, I met with no annoyance of any kind. As twelve o'clock struck an extraordinary change came over the neighbourhood ; the doors of the public-houses were closed, and, save in

¹ Policeman.

the larger thoroughfares, the whole miserable quarter seemed to become suddenly silent and deserted. I had succeeded in losing myself at least half a dozen times; but go where I would, turn where I might, two things struck me—first, the extraordinary number of policemen about; second, the frightened way in which men and women, particularly the homeless wanderers of the night, of both sexes, regarded me. Belated wayfarers would step aside out of my path, and stare at me, as though with dread. Some, more timorous than the rest, would even cross the road at my approach; or, avoiding me, start off at a run or at a shambling trot. It puzzled me at first. Why on earth should the poverty-stricken rabble, who had the misfortune to live in this wretched neighbourhood, be afraid of a man, or appear to be afraid of a man, who had a decent coat to his back?

“The side streets, as I say, were almost absolutely deserted, save for infrequent policemen who gave me good-night, or gazed at me suspiciously. I was wandering aimlessly along, when my curiosity was suddenly aroused by a powerful, acrid, and peculiar odour. ‘Without doubt,’ said I to myself, ‘that is the nastiest stench it has ever been my misfortune to smell in the whole course of my life.’

'Stench' is a Johnsonian word, and very expressive; it's the only word to convey any idea of the nastiness of the mixed odours which assailed my nostrils. 'I will follow my nose,' I said to myself, and I turned down a narrow lane, a short lane, lit by a single gas-lamp. 'It gets worse and worse,' I thought, 'and it can't be far off, whatever it is.' It was so bad that I actually had to hold my nose.

"At that moment I ran into the arms of a policeman, who appeared to spring suddenly out of the earth.

"'I'm sure I beg your pardon,' I said to the man.

"'Don't mention it, sir,' replied the policeman briskly, and there was something of a countryman's drawl in the young man's voice. 'Been and lost yourself, sir, I suppose?' he continued.

"'Well, not exactly,' I replied. 'The fact is, I wandered down here to see where the smell came from.'

"'You've come to the right shop, sir,' said the policeman, with a smile; 'it's a regular devil's kitchen they've got going on down here, it's just a knacker's, sir, that's what it is; and they make glue, and size, and cat's-meat, and patent manure. It isn't a trade that most

people would hanker for,' said the young policeman with a smile. 'They are in a very large way of business, sir, are Melmoth Brothers; it might be worth your while, sir, to take a look round; you'll find the night-watchman inside, sir, and he'd be pleased to show you over the place for a trifle; and it's worth seeing is Melmoth Brothers.'

" 'I'll take your advice, and have a look at the place,' I answered. 'There seem to be a great number of police about to-night, my man,' I said.

" 'Well, yes, sir,' replied the constable, 'you see the scare down here gets worse and worse; and the people here are just afraid of their own shadows after midnight; the wonder to my mind is, sir, that we haven't dropped on to him long ago.'

" Then all at once it dawned upon me why it was that men and women had turned aside from me in fear; then I saw why it was that the place seemed a perfect ants'-nest of police. The great scare was at its height: the last atrocity had been committed only four days before.

" 'Why, bless my heart, sir,' cried the young policeman confidentially, 'one might come upon him red-handed at any moment. I only wish it was my luck to come across him, sir,'

he added. 'Lor bless ye, sir,' the young policeman went on, 'he'll be a pulling it off just once too often, one of these nights.'

" 'Well, I suppose he helps to keep you awake,' I said with a smile, for want of something better to say.

" 'Keep me awake, sir!' said the man solemnly; 'I don't suppose there's a single constable in the whole H Division as thinks of aught else. Why, sir, he haunts me like; and do you know, sir'—and the man's voice suddenly dropped to a very low whisper—'I do think as how I saw him;' and then he gave a sigh. 'I was standing, sir, just where I was when I popped out on you, a hiding-up like; it was more than a month ago, and there was a woman standing crying, leaning on that very post, sir, by Melmoth Brothers' gate, with just a thin ragged shawl, sir, drawn over her head. She was down upon her luck, I suppose, you see, sir—and there was a heavyish fog on at the time—when stealing up out of the fog behind where that poor thing was standing, sir, sobbing and crying for all the world just like a hungry child, I saw something brown noiselessly stealing up towards the woman; she had her back to it, sir,—and she never moved. I could just make out the stooping figure of a man, who came swiftly

forward with noiseless footsteps, crouching along in the deep shadow of yonder wall. I rubbed my eyes to see if I was awake or dreaming; and, as the crouching figure rapidly advanced, I saw that it was a man in a long close-fitting brown coat of common tweed. He'd got a black billycock jammed down over his eyes, and a red cotton comforter that hid his face; and in his *left* hand, which he held behind him, sir, was something that now and again glittered in the light of that lamp up there. I loosed my truncheon, sir, and I stood back as quiet as a mouse, for I guessed who I'd got to deal with. Whoever he was, he meant murder, that was clear—murder and worse. All of a sudden, sir, he turned and ran back into the fog, and I after him as hard as I could pelt; and then he disappeared just as if he'd sunk through the earth. I blew my whistle, sir, and I reported what I'd seen at the station, and the superintendent—he just reprimanded me, that's what he did.

““1839, I don't believe a word of it,” said he; and he didn't.

““But I *did* see him, sir, all the same; and if I get the chance,’ said the man bitterly, ‘I'll put my mark on him.’

““Well, policeman,’ I said, ‘I hope you may, for your sake,’ and then I forced a shilling on

him. 'I'll go and have a look round at Melmoth Brothers' place,' I said. I gave the young policeman good-night, and I crossed the road and walked through the open gateway into a large yard, from whence proceeded the atrocious odour that poisoned the neighbourhood.

"The place was on a slope, it was paved with small round stones, and was triangular in shape; a high wall at the end by which I had entered formed the base of the triangle, and one side of the narrow lane in which I had left the young policeman. There was a sort of shed or shelter of corrugated iron running along this wall, and under the shed I could indistinctly see the figures of horses and other animals, evidently secured, in a long row. All down one side of the boundary wall of the great yard which sloped from the lane towards the point of the triangle, I saw a number of furnace doors, five and twenty of them at least; they appeared to be let into a long low wall of masonry of the most solid description, and they presented an extraordinary appearance, giving one the idea of the hulk of a mysterious ship, burnt well-nigh to the water's edge, through whose closed ports the fire, which was slowly consuming her, might be plainly seen. The curious similitude

to a burning hulk was rendered still more striking by the fact that, above the low wall in which the furnace doors were set, there was a heavy cloud of dense white steam which hung suspended above what seemed like the burning hull of the great phantom ship. There wasn't a breath of air last night, you know, to stir that reeking cloud of fetid steam; and the young summer moon shone down upon it bright and clear, making the heaped piles of steaming vapour look like great clouds of fleecy whiteness. The place was silent as the grave itself, save for a soft bubbling sound as of some thick fluid that perpetually boiled and simmered, and the occasional movement of one of the tethered animals. The wall opposite the row of furnaces, which formed the other side of the triangle, had a number of stout iron rings set in it some four feet apart, and looked, for all the world, like some old wharf from which the sea had long ago receded. At the apex of the triangle, where the walls nearly met, were a pair of heavy double doors of wood, which were well-nigh covered with stains and splashes of dazzling whiteness; and the ground in front of them was stained white too, as though milk, or whitewash, had been spilled, for several feet.

“There were great wooden blocks and huge benches standing about in the great paved yard ; and I noted a couple of solid gallows-like structures, from each of which depended an iron pulley, holding a chain and a great iron hook. I noted, too, as a strange thing, that though the ground was paved with rounded stones—and, as you know, it was a dry night and early summer—yet in many places there were puddles of dark mud, and the ground there was wet and slippery.

“But what struck me as the strangest thing of all in this weird and dreadful place, were the numerous horses lying about in every direction, apparently sleeping soundly ; but as I stared at them, brilliantly lighted up as they were by the rays of the clear bright moon, I saw that they were not sleeping beasts at all—that they were not old and worn-out animals calmly sleeping in happy ignorance of the fate that waited them on the morrow—but by their strange stiffened and gruesome attitudes, I perceived that the creatures were already dead.

“I’m no longer a child, I have no illusions, and I’m not easily frightened ; but I felt a terrible sense of oppression come over me in this dreadful place. I began to feel as a little one feels when he is thrust, for the first time

in his life, into a dark room by a thoughtless nurse. But I had come out of curiosity to see the place; I had expressed my intention of doing so to Constable 1839 of the H Division; so I made up my mind to go through with it. I would see what there was to be seen, I would learn something about the mysterious trade of Melmoth Brothers; and as a preliminary I proceeded to light my briar-root, so as, if possible, to get rid to some extent of the numerous diabolical smells of the place by the fragrant odour of Murray's mixture.

"And then, when I had lighted my pipe, I was startled by a hoarse voice which suddenly croaked out—'Make yourself at home, guv'nor; don't you stand on no sort o' ceremony, for you look a gentleman, you does; a real gentleman, a chap what always has the price of a pint in his pocket, and wouldn't grudge the loan of a bit of baccy to a pore old chap as is down on his luck.'

"I turned to the place from whence the voice proceeded. It was a strange-looking creature that had addressed me. He was an old man with a pointed gray beard, who sat upon a bench of massive timber covered with dreadful stains. The bright moon lighted up his face, and I could see his features as clearly as though I saw them by the light of day. He

was clad in a long linen jerkin of coarse stuff, reaching nearly to his heels; but its colour was no longer white—the garment was red, reddened by awful smears and splashes from head to foot. The figure wore a pair of heavy jack-boots, with wooden soles, nigh upon an inch thick, to which the uppers were riveted with nails of copper; those great boots of his made me sick to look at them. But the strangest thing of all in the dreadful costume of the grim figure was the head-dress, which was a close-fitting wig of knitted gray wool; very similar, in appearance at all events, to the undress wig worn by the Lord High Chancellor of England—that wig, that once sacred wig, which Mr. George Grossmith has taught us to look upon with that familiarity which breeds contempt. The wig was tied beneath the pointed beard by a string. I noted that round the figure's waist was a leathern strap, from which hung a sort of black pouch; from the top of this projected, so as to be ready to his hand, the hafts of several knives of divers sorts and sizes. The face was lean, haggard, and wrinkled; fierce ferrety eyes sparkled beneath long shaggy gray eyebrows; and the toothless jaws of the old man and his pointed gray beard seemed to wag convulsively as in suppressed amusement.

And then Macaulay's lines ran through my mind—

‘To the mouth of some dark lair,
Where growling low, a fierce old bear
Lies amidst bones and blood.’

“ ‘Haw-haw ! guv’nor,’ he said, ‘you might think as I was one o’ these murderers. I ain’t the kind of cove as a young woman would care to meet of a summer night, nor any sort of night for the matter of that, am I ? Haw-haw ! But the houses is closed, guv’nor, worse luck ; and I’m dreadful dry.’

“ ‘You talk as if you’d been drinking, my man,’ I said.

“ ‘That’s where you’re wrong, guv’nor. Why, bless me if I’ve touched a drop of drink for six mortal days ; but to-morrow’s pay-day, and to-morrow night, guv’nor—to-morrow night I’ll make up for it. And so you’ve come to look round, eh ? You’re the fust swell as I ever seed in this here blooming yard as had the pluck.’

“And then I began to question him about the details of the hideous business of Melmoth Brothers.

“ ‘They brings ’em in, guv’nor, mostly irregular,’ said the old man ; ‘they brings ’em in dead, and chucks ’em down anywhere, just as you see ; and they brings ’em in alive,

and we ties 'em up and feeds 'em proper, and gives 'em water, according to the Act; and then we just turns 'em into size and glue, or various special lines, or cat's-meat, or patent manure, or superphosphate, as the case may be. We boils 'em all down within twenty-four hours. Haw-haw!' cried the dreadful old man in almost fiendish glee. 'There ain't much left of 'em when *we've* done with 'em, except the smell. Haw-haw! Why, bless ye, there's nigh on half a dozen cab ranks a simmering in them there boilers,' and he pointed to the furnace fires.

"And then the old man led me past the great row of furnace doors, and down the yard to the very end; and then we reached the two low wooden gates which stood at the lower end of the sloping yard. He pushed back one of the splashed and whitened doors with a great iron fork, and propped it open; then he flung open the door of the end furnace, which threw a lurid light into a low vaulted brick-work chamber within. I saw that the floor of the chamber consisted of a vast leaden cistern, and that some fluid, on whose surface was a thick white scum, filled it, and gave forth a strangely acrid and, at the same time, pungent odour.

" 'This 'ere,' said the old man, 'is where we make the superphosphate; there's several tons

of the strongest vitriol in this here place ; we filled up fresh to-day, guv'nor. If I wos to shove you into that there vat, you'd just melt up for all the world like a lump of sugar in a glass of hot toddy ; and you'd come out superphosphate, guv'nor, when they drors the vat. Haw-haw ! Seein's believin', they say ; just you look here. This here barrer's full of fresh horses' bones ; they've been biled nigh on two days. They're bones, you see, real bones, without a bit of flesh on them. You just stand back, guv'nor, lest you get splashed and spiles yer clothes. Haw-haw !'

"I did as I was bid. And then the old man suddenly shot the barrow full of white bones into the steaming vat.

" 'There, guv'nor,' he said, with another diabolical laugh, as the fluid in the cistern of the great arched chamber hissed and bubbled. 'They *wos* bones ; they're superphosphate by this time. There ain't no more to show ye, guv'nor,' said the old man with a leer, as he stretched out his hand.

"I placed a half-crown in it.

" 'I knowed ye was a gentleman,' he said. 'It's a hot night, guv'nor, and I'm dreadful drougthy ; but I do know where a drink's to be had at any hour, when you've got the ready, and I'll be off to get one.'

“ ‘You’ve forgotten to shut the furnace door, my man,’ I said.

“ ‘Thank ye, guv’nor, but I did it a purpose ; the boiler above it’s to be drored to-morrow.’

“ ‘Aren’t you afraid that if you leave the place something may be stolen ?’

“ ‘Lor, guv’nor,’ said the old man with a laugh, ‘you’re the fust as has showed his nose inside of Melmoth Brothers’ premises after dark, except the chaps as works here. Haw-haw ! they dursn’t, guv’nor, come into this place ; they calls it the Devil’s Cookshop hereabouts,’ and taking the iron fork up, the whitened wooden door swung back into its place, and hid the mass of seething vitriol from my view.

“ Then, without a word, the old man in his heavy wooden-soled boots clattered out of the place, leaving me alone upon the premises of Melmoth Brothers.

“ For several minutes I stood and gazed around me upon the strange weird scene of horror, when suddenly I heard a sound in the lane without, a sound as of a half-stifled shriek of agony. I hurried out into the lane at once. I looked up and down it, *and fancied that I saw a dark brown shadow* suddenly disappear within an archway. I walked hurriedly towards the archway. There was nothing.

And now I heard a low voice cry in choking accents, 'Help!' Then there was a groan. At that instant I stumbled over something which lay half in half out of the entrance of a court. It was the body of a man. I stooped over him—it was the young policeman. I recognized his face instantly.

"'I'm glad you've come, sir,' said the poor fellow, in failing accents. 'He's put the hat on me, sir. He stabbed me from behind, and I'm choking, sir. But I saw him plain this time; it *was* him, sir, the man with the brown tweed coat and the red comforter. Don't you move, sir,' said the dying man, in a still lower whisper; '*I see him, sir*; I see him now, stooping and peeping round the archway. If you move, sir, he'll twig you, and he'll slope. Oh, God!' sobbed the poor young constable, and he gave a shudder. He was dead.

"Still leaning over the body of the dead man, I tried to collect my thoughts, for, my friends, I don't mind confessing to you, for the first time in my life, since I was a child, I was really afraid. An awful deadly fear—a fear of I knew not what—had come upon me. I trembled in every limb, my hair grew wet with sweat, and I could hear—yes, I could hear—the actual beating of my own heart, as though it were a sledge-hammer. I was alone—

alone and unarmed, two hours after midnight, in this dreadful place, with—well, I had no doubt with whom. No, not unarmed. I placed my hand upon the truncheon-case of the dead man. I gripped that truncheon which is now lying upon the table, and in an instant my courage came back to me. Then, still stooping over the body of the murdered man, I slowly—very slowly—turned my head. There was the man, the murderer, the wretch who had been so accurately described to me, the crouching figure in the brown tweed coat, with the red cotton comforter loosely wound round his neck. In his *left* hand there was something long and bright and keen, that glittered in the soft moonlight of the silent summer night.

“And I saw his face, his dreadful face, the face that will haunt me to my dying day.

“It wasn't a bit like the descriptions. Mr. Stewart Cumberland's vision of 'The Man' differed in every possible particular from the being whom I watched from under the dark shadow of the entry of the court, as he stood glaring at me in the moonlight, like a hungry tiger prepared to spring. The man had long, crisp-looking locks of tangled hair, which hung on either side of his face. There was no difficulty in studying him; the features were

clearly, even brilliantly illuminated, both by the bright moonlight and by the one street-lamp, which chanced to be above his head ; even the humidity of his fierce black eyes and of his cruel teeth was plainly apparent ; there wasn't a single detail of the dreadful face that escaped me.

“ I'm not going to describe it, it was too awful, and words would fail me. I'll tell you why I'll not describe it in a moment.

“ Have you ever seen a horse with a very tight bearing-rein on ? Of course you have. Well, just as the horse throws his head about in uneasy torture, and champing his bit flings forth great flecks of foam, so did the man I was watching—watching with the hunter's eye, watching as a wild and noxious beast that I was hoping anon to slay—so did his jaws, I say, champ and gnash and mumble savagely and throw forth great flecks of white froth. The creature literally foamed at the mouth, for this dreadful thirst for blood was evidently, as yet, unsatiated. The eyes were those of a madman, or of a hunted beast driven to bay. I have no doubt, no shadow of doubt, in my own mind, that he—the man in the brown coat—was a savage maniac, a person wholly irresponsible for his actions.

“ And now I'll tell you why I'm not going to

describe that dreadful face of his, because, as I have told you, words would fail me. Give free rein to your fancy, let your imagination loose, and they will fail to convey to your mind one tittle of the loathsome horror of those features. The face was scarred in every direction—the mouth——

“Bah ! I need say no more, the man was a leper. I have been in the Southern Seas, and I know—I know what a leper is like.

“But I hadn’t much time for meditation. I was alone with the dead man and his murderer : as likely as not, if the man in the brown coat should escape me, *I* might be accused of the crime ; the very fact of my being possessed of the dead man’s truncheon would be looked on as a damning proof. Gripping the truncheon I rushed out upon the living horror. I would have shouted for assistance, but, why I cannot tell, my voice died away as to a whisper within my breast. It wasn’t fear, for I rushed upon him fully determined to either take or slay the dreadful thing that wore the ghastly semblance of a man. I rushed upon him, I say, and struck furiously at him with the heavy staff. But he eluded me.

“Noiselessly and swiftly, without even breaking the silence of the night, just as a snake slinks into its hole, the creature dived suddenly

beneath my arm, and with an activity that astounded me, passed as though he were without substance (for I heard no sound of footfalls) through the great open gates which formed the entry to the premises of Melmoth Brothers. As he passed under my outstretched arm he must have stabbed through my thin overcoat, and as you see," said Horace Jeaffreson, pointing to the cut in his frock-coat, "an inch or two more, and H. J. wouldn't have been among you to eat his breakfast and spin his yarn. The slash in the overcoat I wore last night, my friends, has a trace of blood-stains on it—but it was not *my* blood.

"‘Now,’ thought I, ‘I’ve got him;’ his very flight filled me with determination, and I resolved to take him alive if possible, for I felt that he was delivered into my hand, and I was determined that he should not escape me; rather than that, I would knock him on the head with as little compunction as I would kill a mad dog.

"As these thoughts passed through my mind, I sped after the murderer of the unfortunate policeman. I gained upon him rapidly, I was within three yards of him, when we reached the middle of the great knackers' yard; and then he attempted to dodge me round a sort of huge chopping-block which stood there.

“‘If you don’t surrender, by God I’ll kill you,’ I shouted.

“He never answered me, he only mowed and gibbered as he fled, threatening me at the same time with the knife which he held in his hand.

“I vaulted the block, and flung myself upon him; and I struck at him savagely and caught him across the forehead with the truncheon; and suddenly uttering a sort of cry as of an animal in pain, he stabbed me through the hand and turned and fled once more, I after him. At the moment I didn’t even know that I had been stabbed. I gained upon him, but he reached the bottom of the yard, and turned in front of the low whitened doors and stopped and stood at bay—crouching, knife in hand, in the strong light thrown out by the open furnace door, as though about to spring. Blood was streaming over his face from the wound I had given him upon his forehead, and it half blinded him; and ever and anon he tried to clear his eyes of it with the cuff of his right hand. His face and figure glowed red and unearthly in the firelight.

“I wasn’t afraid of him now; I advanced on him.

“Suddenly he sprang forward. I stepped back and hit him over the knuckles of his

raised left hand, in which glittered the knife you see upon that table. I struck with all my might, and the knife fell from his nerveless grasp.

"He rushed back with wonderful agility. The white and rotting doors rolled open on their hinges. I saw him fall backwards with a splash into the mass of froth now coloured by the firelight with a pinky glow.

"He disappeared.

"And then, horror of horrors, I saw the dreadful form rise once more, and cling for an instant to the low edge of the great leaden tank, and make its one last struggle for existence; and then it sank beneath the fuming waves, never to rise again.

"That's all I have to tell. I picked up the knife and secured it, with the truncheon, about my person, as best I could.

"I'm glad that I avenged the death of the poor fellow whom I only knew as 1839 H. I shall be happier still if, as I believe, through my humble instrumentality, the awful outrages at the East End of London have ended.¹

"I got to my chambers in the Albany by

¹ *Note by the Editor.*—As yet since Mr. Horace Jeaffreson's strange nocturnal adventure, no further "Outrages" have taken place in Whitechapel. Is Mr. Jeaffreson's theory correct? Time alone will prove this.

three in the morning; then I sent for the nearest doctor to dress my hand. It's not a serious cut, but I had bled like a pig.

"I bought the morning paper on my way here; it gives the details of the murder of Constable 1839 of the H Division by an unknown hand; and it mentions that the murderer appears to have possessed himself of the truncheon of his victim. You see he was stabbed through the great vessels of the lungs.

"I have no further remarks to make, except that I don't believe we shall hear any more of Jack the Ripper. Of one thing I am perfectly certain, that I shall not visit Whitechapel again in a hurry.

"I'd rather, if you don't mind, that you didn't repeat this story of mine for the next six months."

THE LADY MEMBER'S STORY.

As Jeaffreson ceased speaking, the members became aware of a noise in the street, which was gradually becoming louder and louder. There was a scuffling and shuffling as of many feet; and a boisterous altercation was heard in which the commissionaire's voice was plainly audible. Then came angry cries and hooting. As one man the whole club rose and rushed down the stairs, with the President as its head. The first words they could distinguish were spoken in the loud, angry voice of a Scotchman.

"You're disgracing the Lucknow medal, you rascal; for all you know, the woman may be dying."

"Sorry to hear it," replied Willing, the commissionaire, "but my orders is strict. No women is admitted on the premises. She can't die here."

"Shame, shame! inhuman blackguard!" yelled one of the crowd.

At that moment the President stepped forward and inquired what was the matter. A

little Scotchman, who announced that he was a doctor, was fuming with rage ; but Willing, who was perfectly calm, pointed with his thumb to the recumbent figure of a fainting lady, whom two or three of the crowd were carrying.

“That’s the matter, sir. They wants to bring her in here, but I says—‘No females admitted.’”

“The fact is, sir,” blustered the little doctor, “that this lady has been injured just opposite this house in rescuing, in the most gallant manner, a young child from being run over ; and this abominable ruffian”—here he fairly shook his fist at the imperturbable Willing—“refuses to allow her to be brought in here.”

“I think, Willing,” said the President, “that we must relax our rules for once, and admit this lady.”

“Very good, sir,” said Willing ; “but perhaps some of the gentlemen will help to carry her up, so that we mayn’t be obliged to let in strangers.” This last word was pronounced with infinite scorn, in a way which made it at least four syllables long. Accordingly, three of the members carried the lady upstairs, accompanied by the doctor, while Willing thoroughly enjoyed banging the hall-door in the face of the crowd.

In the club-room, aided by strong stimu-

lants, the patient quickly recovered consciousness, and protested that she was perfectly well.

"Gently, gently," said the doctor. "Let us see first that there are no bones broken. Is there a bedroom here this lady could have?" he asked suddenly.

"There is a bedroom," said the President, "but——"

"That's well," said the doctor, "for she won't be fit to be moved for a day or two; she is suffering from a severe shock. Now, madam, if these gentlemen will leave the room until I call them back, I will make you quite comfortable."

The members retired into the ante-room, and before long the doctor joined them.

"There," he said, "it's all done. Now, sir," addressing the President, "I leave it to you to see that she doesn't stir off that sofa till I come back. Let me see—it's now half-past one. I'll be back in a couple of hours—can't come a moment before; I've fifty cases waiting for me at least. I've got a note for her maid, telling her to bring a bag for her mistress here to-night. Hope she won't be in your way; but she can't be moved yet. Good-bye, good-bye. By the way, she's just told me her name is Miss Maxwell."

And almost before the last words were out

of his mouth, the little doctor had vanished down the stairs.

“Well,” said the President, “here is an awkward interruption of our meeting; however, it’s just luncheon-time, and it won’t be any serious infringement of our rule to offer this poor woman some food. After lunch we will see what can be done.” So speaking, he led the way back to the club-room.

After having once apologized for the trouble she was giving, Miss Maxwell, with great tact, avoided the subject of her accident, and proceeded to talk as though she were an ordinary guest at an ordinary luncheon-party. She was a woman of about five-and-thirty, and had travelled and seen a great deal of the world, and her conversation was a decidedly agreeable addition to that of the members. After luncheon the President asked her how her accident had happened; and it was obvious, even from her very modest answer, that she had achieved a gallant rescue of an unfortunate cripple child. After the conclusion of the little story, the President said—

“You will probably already have guessed, Miss Maxwell, that we are all members of a club. I may say that we are now holding one of our important meetings. Our proceedings cannot be conducted in the presence

of a stranger; but what I have to propose is that we elect you an honorary member, for I am sure, from the tenor of the action you have just related, that you would honour our society by belonging to it."

Miss Maxwell bowed, and the President proceeded to give an account of the club, its objects, and its doings.

"There is one thing more I must mention," he concluded. "Rule 4, for the election of honorary members, provides that such members should, on introduction to the club, relate any adventure that may have happened to them in the course of their lives."

"I have had no adventures," said Miss Maxwell, slowly.

"In your case we could *relax* the rule," said the President, "and anything curious which may have happened to yourself will do. I need not say that the members will keep your confidence inviolate."

"There is only one story connected with me," said Miss Maxwell, "and that I have not spoken of for years—the story of my marriage."

"Your marriage?" said the President. "I fear that we have been guilty of great rudeness; we understood *Miss Maxwell* to be——"

"Yes," she replied, "you were right. And yet I consider myself a married woman. I

owe you a debt of thanks for your kindness to me to-night, and since you wish to hear my story, I will tell it you in as few words as possible. Listen."

She leant back on the sofa, very pale and with her eyes closed; then, after a moment's pause, she began to speak.

"Of my early life I need say nothing. I did not meet the man I was destined to love till eight years ago, when I was seven-and-twenty. His name was Lewis Owthwaite. He was then about thirty, and was a Captain in the Guards. He was the last sort of man I ever thought I should care for. I had been left an orphan at a very early age, and had chosen my men friends chiefly in the literary and scientific worlds, and had thought that if I ever married, which seemed improbable, it would be some *savant* or author, or possibly some University professor. When I first met Lewis it was at his own house, Cranley Towers, to which his mother, Lady Sarah Owthwaite, who had taken a fancy to me in London in the previous season, had asked me to spend the Christmas of 1881. My chaperon and former governess, Miss Prince, of course went with me. Lady Sarah had been for many years a widow, and Lewis was her only child, and the last of his race. It was a curious

old house, with a haunted room, in a turret reached only by a winding stone staircase leading out of the great hall. A good many stories were told about this room, which was shut up and quite dismantled. One of which was, that for a week before the death of the head of the house, footsteps were heard every night coming down the staircase and crossing the great hall. Lewis told me afterwards that it was said they had been heard before his father's death by an old servant. He, of course, did not believe the story. When I returned home to London after my visit, Lewis asked permission to call upon me, and May saw us engaged. We were not to be married till the beginning of the winter, and then we were to go abroad.

"Lady Sarah specially asked that, as I had no parents, the wedding might take place from Cranley Towers. To this I willingly consented, and the last day of October was fixed for the wedding. I can never forget that summer of 1882—the spring-time of love, then the summer of hope, and the autumn of despair—for in July the Guards, who had not left England for years, were ordered off for active service in Egypt. Lewis came to see me himself with the news—exultant in the thought that at last his men would have a chance of showing what metal

they were made of. I said nothing. I was struck dumb by the hand of a dread presentiment. For me to lose this man did not mean for a girl to be deprived of the object of a summer fancy, but for a mature woman to lose the one passionate love of her life. He saw my fear in my face.

“‘Why,’ he said, trying to reassure me, ‘why, little woman, this isn’t going to be a long business. I shall be back for the 31st yet. Yes, dearest, I promise you that I will not fail you on our wedding-day.’

“‘You promise,’ I said, trying to speak lightly. ‘Remember, whatever happens, I shall hold you to that.’

“And soon—oh, so soon—he was gone. I will pass over the agony of that cruel time. Why do you men make war? Is there *any* cause on earth which can justify God’s sons in deliberately killing and destroying? And then the horror of the blood-thirst which grows on men in battle. I sicken when I read of it. But I did not think of all this then. The fate of the army meant to me the safety of one man in it; and after every action and skirmish he was safe. Once he wrote that he was wounded—slightly wounded, but still well—and then at last came the end of the campaign, and the troops were ordered home.

“ ‘Welcome me at Cranley Towers,’ he wrote, ‘and have everything ready for our wedding, for I am sure I can manage to be with you on the 31st. I promised you, my darling, that I would not fail you on our wedding-day.’ I went down to his old home, and Lady Sarah began to prepare everything for our wedding. Soon came news that he had actually embarked, and would be at home on the 30th. Our marriage was definitely fixed for Tuesday, October 31st. On the Tuesday night before my wedding day, I was very restless and could not sleep. Tired at last of tossing about, I went down-stairs to fetch a book which I had left in the drawing-room. The lights were of course all out, and I carried a candle. As I passed through the great hall, to my astonishment I heard some one coming down the stone staircase of the turret. I was very much frightened, for I knew none of the servants would dare come down from the haunted room at that hour, and I was afraid burglars had got into the house. I made as much noise as I could, in hopes that the men would be frightened and run back to the haunted room, and I might then have time to rouse the servants. But the steps came steadily on. At last I summoned up courage, and cried out, ‘Who is there?’

“ There was no answer, the steps came nearer,

and at last I felt sure I ought to see the person descending. There was no one, and still the steps came on. They reached the hall, and by the clearer slap upon the wooden floor, I could hear that the feet were naked. The steps passed right before me, and though my eye-balls were strained to their utmost, I could see nothing—nothing. At last the legend flashed across my mind. ‘Before the death of the head of the house’—‘No, no!’ I cried aloud, ‘it cannot—*shall* not be that—he promised he would not fail me on our wedding-day!’ and I rushed up-stairs to my room, half dead with fright and misery. The next morning I determined to think that all had been a dream. Better to distrust the evidence of my senses than to believe in the fulfilment of that awful legend. I thrust my midnight experience to the back of my mind, and bent the whole force of my will to keeping it out of sight. The days passed slowly on. He was coming by sea, he had said, by his doctor’s orders, and we should see him himself before we should have time to get a letter. The morning of the 30th came. My wedding-dress was laid out for me, but I would not try it on. I had been told that to do so was unlucky, and what is the use, I thought, of tempting fate? I was wandering restlessly

about the grounds, when I saw a boy riding quickly up the avenue. I knew by intuition that he was the bearer of a telegram, and I rushed up to the house. But I could not reach it till full five minutes after he had gone in. In the hall I saw the butler, and asked him hurriedly for news. The man stuttered, and would tell me nothing. I turned to Lady Sarah's room. He tried to stop me. 'I think, miss,' he said, 'it might be better if——' But I had already crossed the threshold and shut the door behind me.

"Lady Sarah was standing by the window with a telegram in her hand. She tried to hide it as she saw me, but one glance at her face had been enough. 'You need not hide it from me,'—I hardly recognized that it was my voice speaking,—'Lewis is dead!'

* * * * *

"They brought him home at sunset, my lover, to the old house which had seen in him the last of his race. The house, which had been decked for our wedding, was hung with black to mourn him, as he lay still and senseless in his coffin in the middle of the hall.

"But I would not let them move the white bridal flowers. He was always fond of flowers. I cannot tell you how he died—I heard some one

say fever, but it was all dim like a dream. I sat by his bier till late in the evening, and then the doctor told me I must go and rest, and gave me an opiate. It made me sleep for an hour or two, but suddenly I awoke with a start to hear the clock strike twelve. It was our wedding-day ; my bridegroom was lying stark and still below. He had failed me at the last. No—I would not let him break his word. His promise should be sacred. I felt strangely excited as I got up and dressed.

“My wedding-gown was lying on a sofa forgotten. I put it on, threw my veil over my head, and taking in my hand the ivory prayer-book I was to have used at church, I left my room. The house was dark, but I found my way down-stairs. In the hall were the dim lights which were burning by the bier. He was sleeping alone—my dear one. I went up to the coffin and called him softly. ‘Lewis, I have come ; you shall marry me in spite of fate !’ and I opened the book and began aloud to read the marriage-service. As I came to his first response, I felt I was no longer alone. The grosser sense of sight was useless, but I felt his touch, and I heard his voice. So were we married. Alone together in the midnight hall, by the coffin in which his body lay, his spirit and mine were wedded. I knew no

more for days, for brain fever laid me low ; but when my senses came again, I found the signet ring he had always worn on my marriage finger. He had placed it there—my wedding-ring—that night. It has never left it since.”

And as she finished, Miss Maxwell raised the sacred gold-set stone to her lips ; then opening her eyes, and sitting up, she seemed terrified when she looked on the little band of men—all strangers—to whom she had almost unconsciously divulged the story of a broken life.

But when she looked again, and saw that the eyes of every other member of the club were dimmed with moisture, she was evidently reassured, and just murmuring, “Gentlemen, you are very kind ; I thank you,” she sank back exhausted, and fell into a dead sleep.

Silently and patiently those five serious-faced men stood guard over the recumbent figure of the fair woman who had so strangely and unexpectedly appeared among them. The change that came over her face, and the gradual cessation of the spasmodic upheaving of the bosom were, however, unobserved by all but the President, who suddenly, but without noise, rose and approached the couch. Taking the woman's wrist between his forefinger and thumb, and then bending over her, he listened

for a few moments, while the other four looked on in death-like silence.

Tenderly Richard Ullathorne laid the delicate white hand by the side of the now motionless form ; and as he did so, the door opened, and Miss Maxwell's maid entered, accompanied by the doctor.

" You are too late," whispered the President ; " the lady has gone to seek her husband."

And it was so. The new member lay lifeless on the club sofa.

* * * * *

Four days later a mournful procession was seen wending its way up an avenue of chestnuts towards the little churchyard that overlooks and adjoins Cranley Towers. At its head was a coffin borne on the shoulders of five bronzed English gentlemen, and almost hidden from view by five massive and magnificent wreaths of pure white blossoms.

The Adventurers' Club has not actually ceased to exist, but the club-rooms have never been opened since that memorable day.

THE END.



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